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RUSKIN'S PRE-RAPHAELITISM & OTHER ESSAYS & LECTURES ON ART WITH INTRODUCTION BY LAURENCE BINYON

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IN TWO STYLES OF BINDING, CLOTH, FLAT BACK, COLOURED TOP, AND LEATHER, ROUND CORNERS, GILT TOP.

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ART HAS
MANY USES
AND MANY
PLEASANT-
NESSES
MODERN PAINTERS

PRE-RAPHAELITISM
LECTURES ON ARCHITECTURE & PAINTING: &c
BY JOHN RUSKIN

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INTRODUCTION

In this volume is collected together most of Ruskin's writing on Pre-Raphaelitism, with some other matter of congruous interest. The essay which stands first, and bears this title, was published in 1851. It was an answer to the violent attacks made in the Press on the first exhibited pictures of the three original members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Holman Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti. The lectures on Architecture and Painting, which follow, were delivered at Edinburgh in 1853, and published in the following year. The volume concludes with the Academy Notes issued every year from 1855 to 1859, and mainly concerned with the pictures of the Pre-Raphaelite school and its growing influence on other painters.

We need not here be concerned with Ruskin's personal relation to the artists of the Brotherhood. It is enough to record that the movement was quite independent in its origin. The public championship of the famous author of "Modern Painters" helped the young painters in their early struggle against hostile criticism, as his personal friendship helped them privately; but each pursued his own path, little influenced by Ruskin's criticisms, which sometimes, as in the note on Millais' "Sir Isumbras," proved strangely unsympathetic. The pages which follow are more concerned with what Ruskin conceived to be Pre-Raphaelite principles than with the actual works of the English artists, principles which he was able to illustrate not only from English painting but from the French architects of the Middle Ages.

Pre-Raphaelitism is a term that, like most other terms in *ism*, has been variously interpreted. In the public mind it is associated with two main attributes, a minute particularity of method in painting, and a poetic or romantic temper. But these two main characteristics were soon, in the history of the school, to become separated, one group of artists being dominated by one side of the tradition set up, and another group by the other; so that such diverse works as John Brett's "Aosta" and Burne-Jones' "Mirror of Venus" have both been regarded as Pre-Raphaelite.

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To debate as to which artists have been really faithful to the original principles of the Brotherhood is a sterile exercise. But it may be of use and interest to examine the history of the movement, and to see which of its inspiring ideas were of most value in that renewal of English painting it admittedly achieved.

One leading idea with the youthful group who originally formed the Brotherhood was the idea, so often proclaimed by reformers in various fields, of a "return to Nature." Now, that Art should return to Nature is, strictly speaking, a ridiculous notion ; the two are in antithesis ; and, logically carried out, the proposition would mean that Art should give up its reason for existing. The cry has indeed proved a misleading and mischievous one for those who have allowed theory to dominate instinct. Ruskin in "Modern Painters" had, before the formation of the Brotherhood, exhorted artists to walk with Nature, "rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing." We shall see, however, that he afterwards, when the Pre-Raphaelites had exhibited work which professed to bear out such principles, warned them that as long as they painted only from nature, "however carefully selected and grouped," their pictures could never have the character of the highest kind of compositions. But for all that the idea had value and bore fruit. For in all such movements as those we are considering it is a natural tendency to run to extremes, and the instinct of the artist controls and modifies his carrying out of a theory which, though it may not be logically sound, brings with it a wholesome stimulus. The new movement in poetry inaugurated by Wordsworth forms an almost exact parallel to that of the Pre-Raphaelites in painting. The homeliness and baldness in Wordsworth's early poems, the strained stiffness and angularity in Millais' early pictures, originated in a like principle of revolt from accepted canons of the day, and provoked the same violent denunciation. In either case, these were but symptoms in exaggeration of a desire for absolute sincerity of imagination. Having to conceive a scene or an action, they will abate nothing of what is likely to have really happened ; they are intent on imagining reality, not on the arrangement of their material according to so-called "rules of art," suppressing this or that as unpleasant or wanting in dignity ; they rely on the substantial value of what they have to utter

or depict, and the whole-hearted intensity of their expression of it. It is in this sense only that such movements are a return to Nature.

Sincerity, then, to speak in the broadest terms, was the aim and the achievement of the school. But now we must point out that the same good effect might have been attained by painters working on a quite different method. If, for instance, in the mid-nineteenth century a Velasquez had appeared in England, and a new "Surrender of Breda" been exhibited, what a revolution would it not have caused! That masterpiece is broadly painted, but the absolute veracity and naturalness of it, from which it derives a dignity that no inflated art could ever attain, would have formed a new starting point and condemned for ever concocted compositions doing duty for historical painting. Later on, the work of Velasquez was to attract and leave its impress upon Millais; but at the outset the Brotherhood adopted as a principle the method of unsparing and accurate particularity. Assuredly this was no necessary element in the renewal of English art which they desired. It is, I imagine, generally supposed that this method was a revival of the method of primitive art, and that it was on the strength of this revival that the Brotherhood adopted the name Pre-Raphaelite. As a matter of fact, the young painters knew almost nothing of Italian art before Raphael. The sight and study of engravings after the early frescoes in the Campo Santo at Pisa, gave them a fruitful hint and stimulus; but it was in the direction of a happy *naiveté* and simplicity of representation, not in the direction of realism in detail. There is indeed delightful detail in some of the early Italian painters, such as Fra Angelico, but it is represented in symbol rather than in actuality. A few flowers, each precisely drawn, symbolise the profusion of a flowering field; a few leaves, each precisely drawn, symbolise the intricate foliage of a branch. But such detail as we see in the backgrounds of the English Pre-Raphaelites is essentially a northern thing; and in Giotto, the greatest of Italian Primitives, it is entirely absent. Moreover, it is significant that Mr. Holman Hunt has expressly repudiated the idea that the movement was a revival of, or a return to, medieval art. In Mr. Hunt's eyes, most of Rossetti's work and the work of painters deriving from his inspiration was a falling away from true Pre-Raphaelite

principles into an archaism parallel to that of the German medievalists, Overbeck and his school. In the work of Burne-Jones, as in that of Puvis de Chavannes, we do find detail rendered in the manner of the fifteenth-century Italians, with congruity and felicity.

According to Mr. Hunt, the method of the Brotherhood was simply the inevitable result of going to Nature, and of representing the earth as it is in the beauty of the actual sunlight. Certainly, in the pursuit of this endeavour, they brought new beauties into the world of painting. They refreshed the sight of men by their intense and vivid observation. But their way was only one way, it was not the only way of seeing Nature. A little later was to be born another movement, usually accepted as the antithesis of Pre-Raphaelitism the movement called Impressionism. Now, though apparently so opposed to the Pre-Raphaelites, the artists of the later school appealed just as confidently to the authority of Nature. If the paintings of both schools were lost, historians might easily have inferred from recorded expressions of theory, that the paintings of Holman Hunt and of Claude Monet were of entirely similar character. Both schools professed to paint just what they saw ; but while the Pre-Raphaelite strove to paint a scene as it is, the Impressionist aimed at representing it as it appears ; the one delineated objects, the other rendered the image of things, in their envelope of atmosphere, as impressed on the retina of the eye. The earlier school emphasized one set of truths ; the later another set. But both appealed to Nature.

"The artist," says Reynolds, "who flatters his own indolence, will continually find himself evading this active exertion [of studying the whole effect of his design] and applying his thoughts to the ease and laziness of highly finishing the parts." Reynolds is careful not to condemn minute detail absolutely ; but he points out the great danger of a devotion to it. Ruskin, too, with all his natural love of accurate fineness in art, saw this danger, as we see in his exhortations to J. F. Lewis to adopt a broader and more rapid method. Lewis, we may remember, had been exhibiting pictures of the finest precision of detail for years before the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was formed. But Lewis effected no such powerful renewal of the life of art as did Millais, Hunt, and Rossetti. Nor would a score of such painters as Lewis, for all the immense and fine accomplishment of his work.

What, then, was the really potent and vitalising factor in the movement? It was the imaginative power which informed the Pre-Raphaelites, a power sustained with ardour and intensity through all the effort of high finish which they carried into every corner of their pictures. When the freshness of the inspiring idea flagged, or when lesser talents worked merely with the idea of fidelity to Nature, the result was a tame and tiresome laboriousness.

But we must not be led into the mistake of condemning the Pre-Raphaelite method. Its value lay, however, not, as was claimed for it, in superior exactness of representation, or in scientific completeness, but rather in its imaginative uses. In such a picture as Millais' "Ophelia," for example, I think our pleasure is far less in realising how marvellously each wild-rose petal, each blade of reed, and the feathery intricacy of willow-sprays are rendered, than in the sense of something strange and vivid, "the glory and the freshness of a dream." The most exquisite observation, the daintiest skill, alone and of themselves could never have produced this effect, which nevertheless is inseparable from the means by which it was attained. And now take another instance, Rossetti's large pen-drawing of "Hamlet and Ophelia." Every inch of background and accessories is filled with detail; and here it is not observed, but imagined detail. Just that intensity of effect which it produces on the mind could have been produced in no other way.

Keats, in one of his letters, suggests that poets 'should have distinctness for their luxury.' And in his own poems we see to what glorious use this distinctness in rendering or imagining of fine detail can be put. In the early poems of Tennyson, and in some of Browning, too, we find verse which seems like a rendering into another medium of a Pre-Raphaelite picture. But these poets made no profession of the study of Nature as an ideal.

So far, then, as the movement was productive of value for later art, this close study of Nature, considered as such, counted much less than one might suppose on first thoughts. Ruskin, to whom we must now return, does indeed in his first essay on Pre-Raphaelitism lay immense stress on this side of the movement. He relates the work of the young painters to that of Turner, for whom he claimed that he had illustrated, as none other in art, every phase and aspect of the world of Nature. Turner, according to Ruskin, was the first and greatest of Pre-

Raphaelites. (Later critics have proclaimed him the first and greatest of Impressionists.) But after a time we find something of a change in the critic's attitude.

Ruskin had inborn in him a gift for the fine perception of detail in nature and in art such as no man's has ever surpassed. When he describes the form and colour of the mosses and lichens that he loved, we see them as we never saw them before, as if in a vivid beam, with purified and heightened powers of sight. This faculty of inexhaustible sensitiveness to the beauty, and trained perception of the significance, of Nature's minute handiwork, quickened perpetually by a subtle and powerful intelligence and allied to a corresponding gift for expression in language, was one of the most distinctive faculties of his genius. He could not but welcome delightedly such work as the first masterpieces of the Brotherhood, appealing as they did so strongly to this instinct in him. Ruskin was eminent first as a naturalist, and geology was as much a passion with him as architecture or painting.

And yet if we read the criticisms in the Academy Notes, here reprinted, we shall, I think, be struck more by his warnings against excess of detail than by his insistence on the beauty of it. Ruskin soon found that the success of the school produced imitators, who could copy the industry of its method but not its imaginative intensity. Moreover, with all his fondness for minute precision, he had no prejudice against broad and summary brushwork ; no one admired more than he the rapid sweep of Tintoret's hand.

In the lectures on Architecture and Painting Ruskin admirably and finally puts the truth about detail and finish in art. Fine convention stops short of the whole truth, he says, but never falsifies. This is the criterion, not the greater or the less degree of realisation and completeness. In these lectures we find a further stage in the development of the writer's mind.

He finds in the Pre-Raphaelites—and now he insists more on the temper in which their work was done than on the method of it—an affinity with the spirit of the medieval artists who built and carved the great cathedrals. He begins to express the dissatisfaction with the ideals of the Renaissance and all its heritage, the belief that with the Middle Ages had been lost something of precious worth for art and life, to which his later writings bear such eloquent witness and with which were bound

up his growing ideas of social reform. It may be perfectly true, as Mr. Holman Hunt has claimed, that there was no thought of a turning back to medieval aspirations in the initial phase of Pre-Raphaelitism ; it is none the less true that the movement, as continued through Rossetti into the work of Burne-Jones and William Morris (whether we call it by the name adopted by the Brotherhood or not matters little), has been fruitful and far-reaching beyond any other such movement, inducing a change in the whole outlook on life and humanity, as well as on art, by its re-discovery and resumption of ideals which the Renaissance had broken off and overshadowed.

And in this no one bore so prominent a part or exercised so profound an influence as Ruskin. The Renaissance to him—I speak of his maturer writings—expressed arrogance and materialism, the self-glorification of man. It bequeathed, or seemed to him to bequeath, a conception of art as something exotic in life, an affair of collectors and museums, a pleasure for the rich and the few. Against this conception he pleaded with all his soul for art that should be a living and spontaneous growth, flowering in the daily life of men and beautifying all we make and use.

Ruskin was a great spirit, and a great writer. But it is useless not to recognise his faults and limitations. Caprice was always imperilling his judgment. We all know, we are all irritated or perplexed by, his astonishing judgments on particular artists ; we think of Michel Angelo disparaged, Rembrandt depreciated, Claude belittled, Constable contemned, Crome ignored ; we remember the extravagances in his praise of Turner and Tintoret, the preference of men like William Hunt to men like Girtin, and the thousand self-contradictions of his wayward genius ; and we feel sometimes inclined to ask ourselves whether this man can be a safe guide in anything. Yet let us remember also that no great critic—and great critics are rarer even than great creators—but has delivered extraordinary judgments upon particular men. It may well happen that an artist or a writer, who cannot count for the world above the second-rate, supplies to the imaginative critic's mind just the germ or stimulus for which it was waiting, and comes therefore to be valued by him out of all true proportion. Ruskin's faults are bound up and entwined with his excellences. He had not, I think, a very profound sympathy with the creative instinct of

the artist; but this want is but the weakness of a wonderful gift for observation and analysis. Allied to his sympathy with the medieval spirit was his strange lack of sense for the beauty of the nude human form, that central theme of Renaissance art. He had an incomparable sense for the beauty of clouds and streams and rocks and flowers, but confessed that he saw no beauty in a horse. His nature was one of the utmost rarity, and of great singularity. But let all his faults be summed, and all his caprices weighed, nothing will take from him his power to spur, to kindle, to illuminate; his criticism of art will always interest because it 'brought everything to a root in human passion or human hope'; he wrote of things that live, and he made their life more precious to us by his writings; he moves us because he is moved, and the more deeply that through all his sense of the beauty in the world and in the works of man vibrates no less passionately a sense of the wrong, the deformity, and the pain in both. *It is written "in the sweat of thy brow," but it was never written "in the breaking of thy heart" thou shalt eat bread:* in such sentences as this, upon the first page of the present volume, we come to the very heart of Ruskin; and who that has listened to it can ever lose from his mind the voice of that burning pity and generous indignation?

LAURENCE BINYON.

February 1906.

The following is a list of Ruskin's published works :—

Ruskin's first printed writings were contributions to the "Magazine of Natural History," 1834-6, and poems in "Friendship's Offering," 1835. Oxford prize poem, "Salsette and Elephanta," 1839.

"Modern Painters," Vol. I. 1843; 2nd ed., 1844; 3rd. ed., 1846—later ones followed; Vol. II., 1846; Vol. III., 1856; Vol. IV., 1856; Vol. V., 1860. Selections from "Modern Painters" have been published under the titles of "Frondes Agrestes," 1875; "In Montibus Sanctis," 1884; "Cœli Enarrant," 1885.

"Seven Lamps of Architecture," 1849; second edition, 1855. "The Scythian Guest," 1849 (from "Friendship's Offering"); "Poems," 1850 (from "Friendship's Offering," "Amaranth," "London Monthly Miscellany," "Keepsake," Heath's "Book of Beauty," with others not previously printed). "Stones of Venice," Vol. I., 1851; second edition, 1858; Vol. II., 1853; second edition, 1867; Vol. III., 1853; second edition, 1867. "The King of the Golden River," 1851; "Notes on the Construction of Sheepfolds,"

1851; "Examples of the Architecture of Venice," 1851; "Pre-Raphaelitism," 1851; "The National Gallery," 1852; "Giotto and his works in Padua," 3 parts, 1853, 1854, 1860; "Lectures on Architecture and Painting," 1854, 1855; "The Opening of the Crystal Palace," 1854; Pamphlet for the preservation of Ancient Buildings and Landmarks, 1854; "Notes on the Royal Academy," No. I., 1855 (three editions); No. II., 1856 (six editions); No. III. (four editions), 1857 (two editions); Nos. IV., V. and VI., 1858, 1859, 1875; "The Harbours of England," 1856, 1857, 1859; "Notes on the Turner Gallery at Marlborough House," 1856-7 (several editions in 1857); "Catalogue of the Turner Sketches in the National Gallery," 1857 (two editions); "Catalogue of Turner's Drawings," 1857-8; "The Elements of Drawing," 1857 (two editions); "The Political Economy of Art," 1857, published in 1880 as "A Joy for Ever"; "Inaugural Addresses at the Cambridge School of Art," 1858; "The Geology of Chamouni," 1858; "The Oxford Museum," 1859; "The Unity of Art," 1859; "The Two Paths," 1859; "Elements of Perspective," 1859; "Tree Twigs," 1861; "Catalogue of Turner Drawings presented to the Fitzwilliam Museum," 1861; "Unto this Last," 1862 (from the "Cornhill Magazine"); "Forms of the Stratified Alps of Savoy," 1863; "The Queen's Gardens," 1864; "Sesame and Lilies," 1865 (two editions); "The Ethics of the Dust," 1866; "The Crown of Wild Olive," 1866 (two editions); "War," 1866; "Time and Tide," 1867; "Leoni, a legend of Italy," 1868 (from "Friendship's Offering"); "Notes on the Employment of the Destitute and Criminal Classes," 1868; "References to Paintings in illustration of Flamboyant Architecture," 1869; "The Mystery of Life and its Arts" (afternoon lectures), 1869; "The Queen of the Air," 1869 (two editions); "The Future of England," 1870; "Samuel Prout," 1870 (from "The Art Journal"); "Verona and its Rivers," 1870; "Lectures on Art," 1870; "Drawings and Photographs illustrative of the Architecture of Verona," 1870; "Fors Clavigera," 1871-84; "Munera Pulveris," 1872; "Aratra Pentelici," 1872; "Instructions in Elementary Drawing," 1872; "The Relation between Michael Angelo and Tintoret," 1872; "The Eagle's Nest," 1872; "Monuments of the Cavalli Family," 1872; "The Nature and Authority of Miracle" (from the "Contemporary Review"), 1873; "Val D'Arno," 1874; "Mornings in Florence" (in parts), 1875-7; "Proserpina" (in parts), 1875-86; Vol. I., 1879; "Deucalion" (in parts), 1875-1883; Vol. I., 1879; Vol. II. (two parts only), 1880, 1883; "Ariadne Florentina," 1876; "Letters to the 'Times' on Pre-Raphaelite Pictures in the Exhibition of 1854," 1876; "Yewdale and its Streamlets," 1877; "St. Mark's Rest" (3 parts), 1877-9, 1884; "Guide to Pictures in the Academy of Arts, Venice," 1877; "Notes on the Turner Exhibition," 1878; "The Laws of Fésole" (four parts, 1877-8), 1879; "Notes on the Prout and Hunt Exhibition," 1879-80; "Circular respecting the Memorial Studies at St. Mark's," 1879-80; "Letters to the Clergy" (Lord's Prayer and the Church), 1879, 1880; "Arrows of the Chace," 2 vols., 1880; "Elements of English Prosody," 1880; "The Bible of Amiens," 1884 (first published in parts); "Love's Meinie" (Lectures delivered at Oxford, 1873-81), 1881; "Catalogue of Drawings and Sketches by Turner in the National Gallery," 1881; "Catalogue of

PRE-RAPHAELITISM

TO

FRANCIS HAWKSWORTH FAWKES, ESQ.,

OF FARNLEY,

These Pages,

WHICH OWE THEIR PRESENT FORM TO ADVANTAGES GRANTED BY HIS KINDNESS,

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND,

JOHN RUSKIN.

PREFACE

EIGHT years ago, in the close of the first volume of "Modern Painters," I ventured to give the following advice to the young artists of England:—

"They should go to nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thought but how best to penetrate her meaning; rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing." Advice which, whether bad or good, involved infinite labour and humiliation in the following it; and was therefore, for the most part, rejected.

It has, however, at last been carried out, to the very letter, by a group of men who, for their reward, have been assailed with the most scurrilous abuse which I ever recollect seeing issue from the public press. I have, therefore, thought it due to them to contradict the directly false statements which have been made respecting their works; and to point out the kind of merit which, however deficient in some respects, those works possess beyond the possibility of dispute.

DENMARK HILL,
Aug. 1851.

PRE-RAPHAELITISM

It may be proved, with much certainty, that God intends no man to live in this world without working: but it seems to me no less evident that He intends every man to be happy in his work. It is written, "in the sweat of thy brow," but it was never written, "in the breaking of thine heart," thou shalt eat bread: and I find that, as on the one hand, infinite misery is caused by idle people, who both fail in doing what was appointed for them to do, and set in motion various springs of mischief in matters in which they should have no concern, so on the other hand, no small misery is caused by over-worked and unhappy people, in the dark views which they necessarily take up themselves, and force upon others, of work itself. Were it not so, I believe the fact of their being unhappy is in itself a violation of divine law, and a sign of some kind of folly or sin in their way of life. Now in order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed: They must be fit for it: They must not do too much of it: and they must have a sense of success in it—not a doubtful sense, such as needs some testimony of other people for its confirmation, but a sure sense, or rather knowledge, that so much work has been done well, and fruitfully done, whatever the world may say or think about it. So that in order that a man may be happy, it is necessary that he should not only be capable of his work, but a good judge of his work.

The first thing then that he has to do, if unhappily his parents or masters have not done it for him, is to find out what he is fit for. In which inquiry a man may be very safely guided by his likings, if he be not also guided by his pride. People usually reason in some such fashion as this: "I don't seem quite fit for a head-manager in the firm of ——— & Co., therefore, in all probability, I am fit to be Chancellor of the Exchequer." Whereas, they ought rather to reason thus: "I don't seem quite fit to be head-manager in the firm of ——— & Co., but I dare say I might do something in a small greengrocery business; I used to be a

good judge of peas;" that is to say, always trying lower instead of trying higher, until they find bottom: once well set on the ground, a man may build up by degrees, safely, instead of disturbing every one in his neighbourhood by perpetual catastrophes. But this kind of humility is rendered especially difficult in these days, by the contumely thrown on men in humble employments. The very removal of the massy bars which once separated one class of society from another, has rendered it tenfold more shameful in foolish people's, i. e. in most people's eyes, to remain in the lower grades of it, than ever it was before. When a man born of an artisan was looked upon as an entirely different species of animal from a man born of a noble, it made him no more uncomfortable or ashamed to remain that different species of animal, than it makes a horse ashamed to remain a horse, and not to become a giraffe. But now that a man may make money, and rise in the world, and associate himself, unreproached, with people once far above him, not only is the natural discontentedness of humanity developed to an unheard-of extent, whatever a man's position, but it becomes a veritable shame to him to remain in the state he was born in, and everybody thinks it his *duty* to try to be a "gentleman." Persons who have any influence in the management of public institutions for charitable education know how common this feeling has become. Hardly a day passes but they receive letters from mothers who want all their six or eight sons to go to college, and make the grand tour in the long vacation, and who think there is something wrong in the foundations of society, because this is not possible. Out of every ten letters of this kind, nine will allege, as the reason of the writer's importunity, their desire to keep their families in such and such a "station of life." There is no real desire for the safety, the discipline, or the moral good of the children, only a panic horror of the inexpressibly pitiable calamity of their living a ledge or two lower on the molehill of the world—a calamity to be averted at any cost whatever, of struggle, anxiety, and shortening of life itself. I do not believe that any greater good could be achieved for the country, than the change in public feeling on this head, which might be brought about by a few benevolent men, undeniably in the class of "gentlemen," who would, on principle, enter into some of our commonest trades, and

make them honourable ; showing that it was possible for a man to retain his dignity, and remain, in the best sense, a gentleman, though part of his time was every day occupied in manual labour, or even in serving customers over a counter. I do not in the least see why courtesy, and gravity, and sympathy with the feelings of others, and courage, and truth, and piety, and what else goes to make up a gentleman's character, should not be found behind a counter as well as elsewhere, if they were demanded or even hoped for, there.

Let us suppose, then, that the man's way of life and manner of work have been discreetly chosen ; then the next thing to be required is, that he do not over-work himself therein. I am not going to say anything here about the various errors in our systems of society and commerce, which appear (I am not sure if they ever do more than appear) to force us to over-work ourselves merely that we may live ; nor about the still more fruitful cause of unhealthy toil—the incapability, in many men, of being content with the little that is indeed necessary to their happiness. I have only a word or two to say about one special cause of over-work—the ambitious desire of doing great or clever things, and the hope of accomplishing them by immense efforts : hope as vain as it is pernicious ; not only making men over-work themselves, but rendering all the work they do unwholesome to them. I say it is a vain hope, and let the reader be assured of this (it is a truth all-important to the best interests of humanity). *No great intellectual thing was ever done by great effort ;* a great thing can only be done by a great man, and he does it *without* effort. Nothing is, at present, less understood by us than this—nothing is more necessary to be understood. Let me try to say it as clearly, and explain it as fully as I may.

I have said no great *intellectual* thing : for I do not mean the assertion to extend to things moral. On the contrary, it seems to me that just because we are intended, as long as we live, to be in a state of intense moral effort, we are *not* intended to be in intense physical or intellectual effort. Our full energies are to be given to the soul's work—to the great fight with the Dragon—the taking the kingdom of heaven by force. But the body's work and head's work are to be done quietly, and comparatively without effort.

Neither limbs nor brain are ever to be strained to their utmost; that is not the way in which the greatest quantity of work is to be got out of them: they are never to be worked furiously, but with tranquillity and constancy. We are to follow the plough from sunrise to sunset, but not to pull in race-boats at the twilight: we shall get no fruit of that kind of work, only disease of the heart.

How many pangs would be spared to thousands, if this great truth and law were but once sincerely, humbly understood,—that if a great thing can be done at all, it can be done easily; that, when it is needed to be done, there is perhaps only one man in the world who can do it; but *he* can do it without any trouble—without more trouble, that is, than it costs small people to do small things; nay, perhaps, with less. And yet what truth lies more openly on the surface of all human phenomena? Is not the evidence of Ease on the very front of all the greatest works in existence? Do they not say plainly to us, not, "there has been a great *effort* here," but, "there has been a great *power* here?" It is not the weariness of mortality, but the strength of divinity, which we have to recognise in all mighty things; and that is just what we now *never* recognise, but think that we are to do great things, by help of iron bars and perspiration:—alas! we shall do nothing that way but lose some pounds of our own weight.

Yet let me not be misunderstood, nor this great truth be supposed anywise resolvable into the favourite dogma of young men, that they need not work if they have genius. The fact is that a man of genius is always far more ready to work than other people, and gets so much more good from the work that he does, and is often so little conscious of the inherent divinity in himself, that he is very apt to ascribe all his capacity to his work, and to tell those who ask how he came to be what he is: "If I *am* anything, which I much doubt, I made myself so merely by labour." This was Newton's way of talking, and I suppose it would be the general tone of men whose genius had been devoted to the physical sciences. Genius in the Arts must commonly be more self-conscious, but in whatever field, it will always be distinguished by its perpetual, steady, well-directed, happy, and faithful labour in accumulating and disciplining its powers, as well as by its gigantic, incommunicable facility in

exercising them. Therefore, literally, it is no man's business whether he has genius or not: work he must, whatever he is, but quietly and steadily; and the natural and unforced results of such work will be always the things that God meant him to do, and will be his best. No agonies nor heart-rendings will enable him to do any better. If he be a great man, they will be great things; if a small man, small things; but always, if thus peacefully done, good and right; always, if restlessly and ambitiously done, false, hollow, and despicable.

Then the third thing needed was, I said, that a man should be a good judge of his work; and this chiefly that he may not be dependent upon popular opinion for the manner of doing it, but also that he may have the just encouragement of the sense of progress, and an honest consciousness of victory: how else can he become

> "That awful independent on to-morrow,
> Whose yesterdays look backwards with a smile."

I am persuaded that the real nourishment and help of such a feeling as this is nearly unknown to half the workmen of the present day. For whatever appearance of self-complacency there may be in their outward bearing, it is visible enough, by their feverish jealousy of each other, how little confidence they have in the sterling value of their several doings. Conceit may puff a man up, but never prop him up; and there is too visible distress and hopelessness in men's aspects to admit of the supposition that they have any stable support of faith in themselves.

I have stated these principles generally, because there is no branch of labour to which they do not apply: But there is one in which our ignorance or forgetfulness of them has caused an incalculable amount of suffering: and I would endeavour now to reconsider them with especial reference to it,—the branch of the Arts.

In general, the men who are employed in the Arts have freely chosen their profession, and suppose themselves to have special faculty for it; yet, as a body, they are not happy men. For which this seems to me the reason,—that they are expected, and themselves expect, to make their bread *by being clever*—not by steady or quiet work; and are,

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therefore, for the most part, trying to be clever, and so living in an utterly false state of mind and action.

This is the case, to the same extent, in no other profession or employment. A lawyer may indeed suspect that, unless he has more wit than those around him, he is not likely to advance in his profession; but he will not be always thinking how he is to display his wit. He will generally understand, early in his career, that wit must be left to take care of itself, and that it is hard knowledge of law and vigorous examination and collation of the facts of every case entrusted to him, which his clients will mainly demand: this it is which he is to be paid for; and this is healthy and measurable labour, payable by the hour. If he happen to have keen natural perception and quick wit, these will come into play in their due time and place, but he will not think of them as his chief power; and if he have them not, he may still hope that industry and conscientiousness may enable him to rise in his profession without them. Again in the case of clergymen: that they are sorely tempted to display their eloquence or wit, none who know their own hearts will deny, but then they *know* this to *be* a temptation: they never would suppose that cleverness was all that was to be expected from them, or would sit down deliberately to write a clever sermon: even the dullest or vainest of them would throw some veil over their vanity, and pretend to some profitableness of purpose in what they did. They would not openly ask of their hearers—Did you think my sermon ingenious, or my language poetical? They would early understand that they were not paid for being ingenious, nor called to be so, but to preach truth; that if they happened to possess wit, eloquence, or originality, these would appear and be of service in due time, but were not to be continually sought after or exhibited; and if it should happen that they had them not, they might still be serviceable pastors without them.

Not so with the unhappy artist. No one expects any honest or useful work of him; but every one expects him to be ingenious. Originality, dexterity, invention, imagination, everything is asked of him except what alone is to be had for asking—honesty and sound work, and the due discharge of his function as a painter. What function? asks the reader in some surprise. He may well ask; for I

suppose few painters have any idea what their function is, or even that they have any at all.

And yet surely it is not so difficult to discover. The faculties, which when a man finds in himself, he resolves to be a painter, are, I suppose, intenseness of observation and facility of imitation. The man is created an observer and an imitator; and his function is to convey knowledge to his fellow-men, of such things as cannot be taught otherwise than ocularly. For a long time this function remained a religious one: it was to impress upon the popular mind the reality of the objects of faith, and the truth of the histories of Scripture, by giving visible form to both. That function has now passed away, and none has as yet taken its place. The painter has no profession, no purpose. He is an idler on the earth, chasing the shadows of his own fancies.

But he was never meant to be this. The sudden and universal Naturalism, or inclination to copy ordinary natural objects, which manifested itself among the painters of Europe, at the moment when the invention of printing superseded their legendary labours, was no false instinct. It was misunderstood and misapplied, but it came at the right time, and has maintained itself through all kinds of abuse; presenting, in the recent schools of landscape, perhaps only the first fruits of its power. That instinct was urging every painter in Europe at the same moment to his true duty—*the faithful representation of all objects of historical interest, or of natural beauty existent at the period;* representation such as might at once aid the advance of the sciences, and keep faithful record of every monument of past ages which was likely to be swept away in the approaching eras of revolutionary change.

The instinct came, as I said, exactly at the right moment; and let the reader consider what amount and kind of general knowledge might by this time have been possessed by the nations of Europe, had their painters understood and obeyed it. Suppose that, after disciplining themselves so as to be able to draw, with unerring precision, each the particular kind of subject in which he most delighted, they had separated into two great armies of historians and naturalists; —that the first had painted with absolute faithfulness every edifice, every city, every battle-field, every scene of the slightest historical interest, precisely and completely

rendering their aspect at the time; and that their companions, according to their several powers, had painted with like fidelity the plants and animals, the natural scenery, and the atmospheric phenomena of every country on the earth—suppose that a faithful and complete record were now in our museums of every building destroyed by war, or time, or innovation, during these last 200 years—suppose that each recess of every mountain chain of Europe had been penetrated, and its rocks drawn with such accuracy that the geologist's diagram was no longer necessary—suppose that every tree of the forest had been drawn in its noblest aspect, every beast of the field in its savage life—that all these gatherings were already in our national galleries, and that the painters of the present day were labouring, happily and earnestly, to multiply them, and put such means of knowledge more and more within reach of the common people—would not that be a more honourable life for them, than gaining precarious bread by "bright effects?" They think not, perhaps. They think it easy, and therefore contemptible, to be truthful; they have been taught so all their lives. But it is not so, whoever taught it them. It is most difficult, and worthy of the greatest men's greatest effort, to render, as it should be rendered, the simplest of the natural features of the earth; but also be it remembered, no man is confined to the simplest; each may look out work for himself where he chooses, and it will be strange if he cannot find something hard enough for him. The excuse is, however, one of the lips only; for every painter knows, that when he draws back from the attempt to render nature as she is, it is oftener in cowardice than in disdain.

I must leave the reader to pursue this subject for himself; I have not space to suggest to him the tenth part of the advantages which would follow, both to the painter from such an understanding of his mission, and to the whole people, in the results of his labour. Consider how the man himself would be elevated; how content he would become, how earnest, how full of all accurate and noble knowledge, how free from envy—knowing creation to be infinite, feeling at once the value of what he did, and yet the nothingness. Consider the advantage to the people: the immeasurably larger interest given to art itself; the easy, pleasurable, and perfect knowledge conveyed by it, in every subject; the far

greater number of men who might be healthily and profitably occupied with it as a means of livelihood; the useful direction of myriads of inferior talents, now left fading away in misery. Conceive all this, and then look around at our exhibitions, and behold the "cattle pieces," and "sea pieces," and "fruit pieces," and "family pieces;" the eternal brown cows in ditches, and white sails in squalls, and sliced lemons in saucers, and foolish faces in simpers; —and try to feel what we are, and what we might have been.

Take a single instance in one branch of archæology. Let those who are interested in the history of Religion consider what a treasure we should now have possessed, if, instead of painting pots, and vegetables, and drunken peasantry, the most accurate painters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been set to copy, line for line, the religious and domestic sculpture on the German, Flemish, and French cathedrals and castles; and if every building destroyed in the French or in any other subsequent revolution, had thus been drawn in all its parts with the same precision with which Gerard Douw or Mieris paint basreliefs of Cupids. Consider, even now, what incalculable treasure is still left in ancient basreliefs, full of every kind of legendary interest, of subtle expression, of priceless evidence as to the character, feelings, habits, histories, of past generations, in neglected and shattered churches and domestic buildings, rapidly disappearing over the whole of Europe—treasure which, once lost, the labour of all men living cannot bring back again; and then look at the myriads of men, with skill enough, if they had but the commonest schooling, to record all this faithfully, who are making their bread by drawing dances of naked women from academy models, or idealities of chivalry fitted out with Wardour Street armour, or eternal scenes from Gil Blas, Don Quixote, and the Vicar of Wakefield, or mountain sceneries with young idiots of Londoners wearing Highland bonnets and brandishing rifles in the foregrounds. Do but think of these things in the breadth of their inexpressible imbecility, and then go and stand before that broken basrelief in the southern gate of Lincoln Cathedral, and see if there is no fibre of the heart in you that will break too.

But is there to be no place left, it will be indignantly asked, for imagination and invention, for poetical power,

or love of ideal beauty? Yes; the highest, the noblest place—that which these only can attain when they are all used in the cause, and with the aid of truth. Wherever imagination and sentiment are, they will either show themselves without forcing, or, if capable of artificial development, the kind of training which such a school of art would give them would be the best they could receive. The infinite absurdity and failure of our present training consists mainly in this, that we do not rank imagination and invention high enough, and suppose that they *can* be taught. Throughout every sentence that I ever have written, the reader will find the same rank attributed to these powers,—the rank of a purely divine gift, not to be attained, increased, or, in anywise modified by teaching, only in various ways capable of being concealed or quenched. Understand this thoroughly; know once for all, that a poet on canvas is exactly the same species of creature as a poet in song, and nearly every error in our methods of teaching will be done away with. For who among us now thinks of bringing men up to be poets?—of producing poets by any kind of general recipe or method of cultivation? Suppose even that we see in a youth that which we hope may, in its development, become a power of this kind, should we instantly, supposing that we wanted to make a poet of him, and nothing else, forbid him all quiet, steady, rational labour? Should we force him to perpetual spinning of new crudities out of his boyish brain, and set before him, as the only objects of his study, the laws of versification which criticism has supposed itself to discover in the works of previous writers? Whatever gifts the boy had, would much be likely to come of them so treated? unless, indeed, they were so great as to break through all such snares of falsehood and vanity, and build their own foundation in spite of us; whereas if, as in cases numbering millions against units, the natural gifts were too weak to do this, could anything come of such training but utter inanity and spuriousness of the whole man? But if we had sense, should we not rather restrain and bridle the first flame of invention in early youth, heaping material on it as one would on the first sparks and tongues of a fire which we desired to feed into greatness? Should we not educate the whole intellect into general strength, and all the affections into warmth and honesty,

and look to heaven for the rest? This, I say, we should have sense enough to do, in order to produce a poet in words: but, it being required to produce a poet on canvas, what is our way of setting to work? We begin, in all probability, by telling the youth of fifteen or sixteen, that Nature is full of faults, and that he is to improve her; but that Raphael is perfection, and that the more he copies Raphael the better; that after much copying of Raphael, he is to try what he can do himself in a Raphaelesque, but yet original, manner: that is to say, he is to try to do something very clever, all out of his own head, but yet this clever something is to be properly subjected to Raphaelesque rules, is to have a principal light occupying one-seventh of its space, and a principal shadow occupying one-third of the same; that no two people's heads in the picture are to be turned the same way, and that all the personages represented are to possess ideal beauty of the highest order, which ideal beauty consists partly in a Greek outline of nose, partly in proportions expressible in decimal fractions between the lips and chin; but partly also in that degree of improvement which the youth of sixteen is to bestow upon God's work in general. This I say is the kind of teaching which through various channels, Royal Academy lecturings, press criticisms, public enthusiasm, and not least by solid weight of gold, we give to our young men. And we wonder we have no painters!

But we do worse than this. Within the last few years some sense of the real tendency of such teaching has appeared in some of our younger painters. It only *could* appear in the younger ones, our older men having become familiarised with the false system, or else having passed through it and forgotten it, not well knowing the degree of harm they had sustained. This sense appeared, among our youths,—increased,—matured into resolute action. Necessarily, to exist at all, it needed the support both of strong instincts and of considerable self-confidence, otherwise it must at once have been borne down by the weight of general authority and received canon law. Strong instincts are apt to make men strange, and rude; self-confidence, however well founded, to give much of what they do or say the appearance of impertinence. Look at the self-confidence of Wordsworth, stiffening every other sentence of his prefaces into defiance; there is no more of it than was needed to

enable him to do his work, yet it is not a little ungraceful here and there. Suppose this stubbornness and self-trust in a youth, labouring in an art of which the executive part is confessedly to be best learnt from masters, and we shall hardly wonder that much of his work has a certain awkwardness and stiffness in it, or that he should be regarded with disfavour by many, even the most temperate, of the judges trained in the system he was breaking through, and with utter contempt and reprobation by the envious and the dull. Consider, farther, that the particular system to be overthrown was, in the present case, one of which the main characteristic was the pursuit of beauty at the expense of manliness and truth; and it will seem likely, *à priori*, that the men intended successfully to resist the influence of such a system should be endowed with little natural sense of beauty, and thus rendered dead to the temptation it presented. Summing up these conditions, there is surely little cause for surprise that pictures painted, in a temper of resistance, by exceedingly young men, of stubborn instincts and positive self-trust, and with little natural perception of beauty, should not be calculated, at the first glance, to win us from works enriched by plagiarism, polished by convention, invested with all the attractiveness of artificial grace, and recommended to our respect by established authority.

We should however, on the other hand, have anticipated, that in proportion to the strength of character required for the effort, and to the absence of distracting sentiments, whether respect for precedent, or affection for ideal beauty, would be the energy exhibited in the pursuit of the special objects which the youths proposed to themselves, and their success in attaining them.

All this has actually been the case, but in a degree which it would have been impossible to anticipate. That two youths, of the respective ages of eighteen and twenty, should have conceived for themselves a totally independent and sincere method of study, and enthusiastically persevered in it against every kind of dissuasion and opposition, is strange enough; that in the third or fourth year of their efforts they should have produced works in many parts not inferior to the best of Albert Durer, this is perhaps not less strange. But the loudness and universality of the howl which the common critics of the press have raised against them, the

utter absence of all generous help or encouragement from those who can both measure their toil and appreciate their success, and the shrill, shallow laughter of those who can do neither the one nor the other,—these are strangest of all—unimaginable unless they had been experienced.

And as if these were not enough, private malice is at work against them, in its own small, slimy way. The very day after I had written my second letter to the Times in the defence of the Pre-Raphaelites, I received an anonymous letter respecting one of them, from some person apparently hardly capable of spelling, and about as vile a specimen of petty malignity as ever blotted paper. I think it well that the public should know this, and so get some insight into the sources of the spirit which is at work against these men—how first roused it is difficult to say, for one would hardly have thought that mere eccentricity in young artists could have excited an hostility so determined and so cruel; —hostility which hesitated at no assertion, however impudent. That of the "absence of perspective" was one of the most curious pieces of the hue and cry which began with the Times, and died away in feeble maundering in the Art Union; I contradicted it in the Times—I here contradict it directly for the second time. There was not a single error in perspective in three out of the four pictures in question. But if otherwise, would it have been anything remarkable in them? I doubt, if, with the exception of the pictures of David Roberts, there were one architectural drawing in perspective on the walls of the Academy; I never met but with two men in my life who knew enough of perspective to draw a Gothic arch in a retiring plane, so that its lateral dimensions and curvatures might be calculated to scale from the drawing. Our architects certainly do not, and it was but the other day that, talking to one of the most distinguished among them, the author of several most valuable works, I found he actually did not know how to draw a circle in perspective. And in this state of general science our writers for the press take it upon them to tell us, that the forest-trees in Mr. Hunt's *Sylvia*, and the bunches of lilies in Mr. Collins's *Convent Thoughts*, are out of perspective.[1]

[1] It was not a little curious, that in the very number of the Art Union which repeated this direct falsehood about the Pre-Raphaelite rejection

It might not, I think, in such circumstances, have been ungraceful or unwise in the Academicians themselves to have defended their young pupils, at least by the contradiction of statements directly false respecting them,[1] and the direction of the mind and sight of the public to such real merit as they possess. If Sir Charles Eastlake, Mulready, Edwin and Charles Landseer, Cope, and Dyce would each of them simply state their own private opinion respecting

of "linear perspective" (by-the-bye, the next time J. B. takes upon him to speak of any one connected with the Universities, he may as well first ascertain the difference between a Graduate and an Under-Graduate), the second plate given should have been of a picture of Bonington's,—a professional landscape painter, observe,—for the want of *aerial* perspective, in which the Art Union itself was obliged to apologise, and in which the artist has committed nearly as many blunders in *linear* perspective as there are lines in the picture.

[1] These false statements may be reduced to three principal heads, and directly contradicted in succession.

The first, the current fallacy of society as well as of the press, was, that the Pre-Raphaelites imitated the *errors* of early painters.

A falsehood of this kind could not have obtained credence anywhere but in England, few English people, comparatively, having ever seen a picture of early Italian Masters. If they had, they would have known that the Pre-Raphaelite pictures are just as superior to the early Italian in skill of manipulation, power of drawing, and knowledge of effect, as inferior to them in grace of design; and that in a word, there is not a shadow of resemblance between the two styles. The Pre-Raphaelites imitate no pictures: they paint from nature only. But they have opposed themselves as a body, to that kind of teaching above described, which only began after Raphael's time: and they have opposed themselves as sternly to the entire feeling of the Renaissance schools; a feeling compounded of indolence, infidelity, sensuality, and shallow pride. Therefore they have called themselves Pre-Raphaelite. If they adhere to their principles, and paint nature as it is around them, with the help of modern science, with the earnestness of the men of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they will, as I said, found a new and noble school in England. If their sympathies with the early artists led them into mediævalism or Romanism, they will of course come to nothing. But I believe there is no danger of this, at least for the strongest among them. There may be some weak ones, whom the Tractarian heresies may touch; but if so, they will drop off like decayed branches from a strong stem. I hope all things from the school.

The second falsehood was, that the Pre-Raphaelites did not draw well. This was asserted, and could have been asserted only by persons who had never looked at the pictures.

The third falsehood was, that they had no system of light and shade. To which it may be simply replied that their system of light and shade is exactly the same as the Sun's; which is, I believe, likely to outlast that of the Renaissance, however brilliant.

their paintings, sign it, and publish it, I believe the act would be of more service to English art than anything the Academy has done since it was founded. But as I cannot hope for this, I can only ask the public to give their pictures careful examination, and to look at them at once with the indulgence and the respect which I have endeavoured to show they deserve.

Yet let me not be misunderstood. I have adduced them only as examples of the kind of study which I would desire to see substituted for that of our modern schools, and of singular success in certain characters, finish of detail, and brilliancy of colour. What faculties, higher than imitative, may be in these men, I do not yet venture to say; but I do say, that if they exist, such faculties will manifest themselves in due time all the more forcibly because they have received training so severe.

For it is always to be remembered that no one mind is like another, either in its powers or perceptions; and while the main principles of training must be the same for all, the result in each will be as various as the kinds of truth which each will apprehend; therefore, also, the modes of effort, even in men whose inner principles and final aims are exactly the same. Suppose, for instance, two men, equally honest, equally industrious, equally impressed with a humble desire to render some part of what they saw in nature faithfully; and, otherwise, trained in convictions such as I have above endeavoured to induce. But one of them is quiet in temperament, has a feeble memory, no invention, and excessively keen sight. The other is impatient in temperament, has a memory which nothing escapes, an invention which never rests, and is comparatively near-sighted.

Set them both free in the same field in a mountain valley. One sees everything, small and large, with almost the same clearness; mountains and grasshoppers alike; the leaves on the branches, the veins in the pebbles, the bubbles in the stream; but he can remember nothing, and invent nothing. Patiently he sets himself to his mighty task; abandoning at once all thoughts of seizing transient effects, or giving general impressions of that which his eyes present to him in microscopical dissection, he chooses some small portion out of the infinite scene, and calculates with courage the number of weeks which must elapse before he can do justice to the

intensity of his perceptions, or the fulness of matter in his subject.

Meantime, the other has been watching the change of the clouds, and the march of the light along the mountain sides; he beholds the entire scene in broad, soft masses of true gradation, and the very feebleness of his sight is in some sort an advantage to him, in making him more sensible of the aerial mystery of distance, and hiding from him the multitudes of circumstances which it would have been impossible for him to represent. But there is not one change in the casting of the jagged shadows along the hollows of the hills, but it is fixed on his mind for ever; not a flake of spray has broken from the sea of cloud about their bases, but he has watched it as it melts away, and could recall it to its lost place in heaven by the slightest effort of his thoughts. Not only so, but thousands and thousands of such images, of older scenes, remain congregated in his mind, each mingling in new associations with those now visibly passing before him, and these again confused with other images of his own ceaseless, sleepless imagination, flashing by in sudden troops. Fancy how his paper will be covered with stray symbols and blots, and undecipherable short-hand:—as for his sitting down to "draw from Nature," there was not one of the things which he wished to represent, that staid for so much as five seconds together: but none of them escaped, for all that: they are sealed up in that strange storehouse of his; he may take one of them out perhaps, this day twenty years, and paint it in his dark room, far away. Now, observe, you may tell both of these men, when they are young, that they are to be honest, that they have an important function, and that they are not to care what Raphael did. This you may wholesomely impress on them both. But fancy the exquisite absurdity of expecting either of them to possess any of the qualities of the other.

I have supposed the feebleness of sight in the last, and of invention in the first painter, that the contrast between them might be more striking; but, with very slight modification, both the characters are real. Grant to the first considerable inventive power, with exquisite sense of colour; and give to the second, in addition to all his other faculties, the eye of an eagle; and the first is John Everett Millais, the second Joseph Mallard William Turner.

They are among the few men who have defied all false teaching, and have therefore, in great measure, done justice to the gifts with which they were entrusted. They stand at opposite poles, marking culminating points of art in both directions; between them, or in various relations to them, we may class five or six more living artists who, in like manner, have done justice to their powers. I trust that I may be pardoned for naming them, in order that the reader may know how the strong innate genius in each has been invariably accompanied with the same humility, earnestness, and industry in study.

It is hardly necessary to point out the earnestness or humility in the works of William Hunt; but it may be so to suggest the high value they possess as records of English rural life, and *still* life. Who is there who for a moment could contend with him in the unaffected, yet humorous truth with which he has painted our peasant children? Who is there who does not sympathise with him in the simple love with which he dwells on the brightness and bloom of our summer fruit and flowers? And yet there is something to be regretted concerning him: why should he be allowed continually to paint the same bunches of hot-house grapes, and supply to the Water Colour Society a succession of pineapples with the regularity of a Covent Garden fruiterer? He has of late discovered that primrose banks are lovely, but there are other things grow wild besides primroses: what undreamt-of loveliness might he not bring back to us, if he would lose himself for a summer in Highland foregrounds; if he would paint the heather as it grows, and the foxglove and the harebell as they nestle in the clefts of the rocks, and the mosses and bright lichens of the rocks themselves. And then, cross to the Jura, and bring back a piece of Jura pasture in spring; with the gentians in their earliest blue, and a soldanelle beside the fading snow! And return again, and paint a grey wall of alpine crag, with budding roses crowning it like a wreath of rubies. That is what he was meant to do in this world; not to paint bouquets in China vases.

I have in various other places expressed my sincere respect for the works of Samuel Prout: his shortness of sight has necessarily prevented their possessing delicacy of finish or fulness of minor detail; but I think that those of no other

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living artist furnish an example so striking of innate and special instinct, sent to do a particular work at the exact and only period when it was possible. At the instant when peace had been established all over Europe, but when neither national character nor national architecture had as yet been seriously changed by promiscuous intercourse or modern "improvement;" when, however, nearly every ancient and beautiful building had been long left in a state of comparative neglect, so that its aspect of partial ruinousness, and of separation from recent active life, gave to every edifice a peculiar interest—half sorrowful, half sublime;—at that moment Prout was trained among the rough rocks and simple cottages of Cornwall, until his eye was accustomed to follow with delight the rents and breaks, and irregularities which, to another man, would have been offensive; and then, gifted with infinite readiness in composition, but also with infinite affection for the kind of subjects he had to portray, he was sent to preserve, in an almost innumerable series of drawings, *every one made on the spot*, the aspect borne, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by cities which, in a few years more, re-kindled wars, or unexpected prosperities, were to ravage, or renovate, into nothingness.

It seems strange to pass from Prout to John Lewis; but there is this fellowship between them, that both seem to have been intended to appreciate the characters of foreign countries more than of their own, nay, to have been born in England chiefly that the excitement of strangeness might enhance to them the interest of the scenes they had to represent. I believe John Lewis to have done more entire justice to all his powers, (and they are magnificent ones,) than any other man amongst us. His mission was evidently to portray the comparatively animal life of the southern and eastern families of mankind. For this, he was prepared in a somewhat singular way—by being led to study, and endowed with altogether peculiar apprehension of, the most sublime characters of animals themselves. Rubens, Rembrandt, Snyders, Tintoret, and Titian, have all, in various ways, drawn wild beasts magnificently; but they have in some sort humanised or demonised them, making them either ravenous fiends, or educated beasts, that would draw cars, and had respect for hermits. The sullen isolation of the brutal nature; the dignity and quietness of the mighty

limbs; the shaggy mountainous power, mingled with grace as of a flowing stream; the stealthy restraint of strength and wrath in every soundless motion of the gigantic frame; all this seems never to have been seen, much less drawn, until Lewis drew and himself engraved a series of animal subjects, now many years ago. Since then, he has devoted himself to the portraiture of those European and Asiatic races, among whom the refinements of civilisation exist without its laws or its energies, and in whom the fierceness, indolence, and subtlety of animal nature are associated with brilliant imagination and strong affections. To this task he has brought not only intense perception of the kind of character, but powers of artistical composition like those of the great Venetians, displaying, at the same time, a refinement of drawing almost miraculous, and appreciable only, as the minutiæ of nature itself are appreciable, by the help of the microscope. The value, therefore, of his works, as records of the aspect of the scenery and inhabitants of the south of Spain and of the East, in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, is quite above all estimate.

I hardly know how to speak of Mulready: in delicacy and completion of drawing, and splendour of colour, he takes place beside John Lewis and the Pre-Raphaelites; but he has, throughout his career, displayed no definiteness in choice of subject. He must be named among the painters who have studied with industry, and have made themselves great by doing so; but having obtained a consummate method of execution, he has thrown it away on subjects either altogether uninteresting, or above his powers, or unfit for pictorial representation. "The Cherry Woman," exhibited in 1850, may be named as an example of the first kind; the "Burchell and Sophia" of the second (the character of Sir William Thornhill being utterly missed); the "Seven Ages" of the third; for this subject cannot be painted. In the written passage, the thoughts are progressive and connected; in the picture they must be coexistent, and yet separate; nor can all the characters of the ages be rendered in painting at all. One may represent the soldier at the cannon's mouth, but one cannot paint the "bubble reputation" which he seeks. Mulready, therefore, while he has always produced exquisite pieces of painting, has failed in doing anything which can be of true

or extensive use. He has, indeed, understood how to discipline his genius, but never how to direct it.

Edwin Landseer is the last painter but one whom I shall name: I need not point out to any one acquainted with his earlier works, the labour, or watchfulness of nature which they involve, nor need I do more than allude to the peculiar faculties of his mind. It will at once be granted that the highest merits of his pictures are throughout found in those parts of them which are least like what had before been accomplished; and that it was not by the study of Raphael that he attained his eminent success, but by a healthy love of Scotch terriers.

None of these painters, however, it will be answered, afford examples of the rise of the highest imaginative power out of close study of matters of fact. Be it remembered, however, that the imaginative power, in its magnificence, is not to be found every day. Lewis has it in no mean degree, but we cannot hope to find it at its highest more than once in an age. We *have* had it once, and must be content.

Towards the close of the last century, among the various drawings executed, according to the quiet manner of the time, in greyish blue, with brown foregrounds, some began to be noticed as exhibiting rather more than ordinary diligence and delicacy, signed W. Turner.[1] There was nothing, however, in them at all indicative of genius, or even of more than ordinary talent, unless in some of the subjects a large perception of space, and excessive clearness and decision in the arrangement of masses. Gradually and cautiously the blues became mingled with delicate green, and then with gold; the browns in the foreground became first more positive, and then were slightly mingled with other local colours; while the touch, which had at first been heavy and broken, like that of the ordinary drawing masters of the time, grew more and more refined and expressive, until it lost itself in a method of execution often too delicate for the eye to follow, rendering, with a precision before unexampled, both the texture and the form of every object. The style may be considered as perfectly formed about the year 1800, and it remained unchanged for twenty years.

[1] He did not use his full signature, J. M. W., until about the year 1800.

During that period the painter had attempted, and with more or less success had rendered, every order of landscape subject, but always on the same principle, subduing the colours of nature into a harmony of which the key-notes are greyish green and brown; pure blues, and delicate golden yellows being admitted in small quantity as the lowest and highest limits of shade and light: and bright local colours in extremely small quantity in figures or other minor accessaries.

Pictures executed on such a system are not, properly speaking, works in *colour* at all; they are studies of light and shade, in which both the shade and the distance are rendered in the general hue which best expresses their attributes of coolness and transparency; and the lights and the foreground are executed in that which best expresses their warmth and solidity. This advantage may just as well be taken as not, in studies of light and shadow to be executed with the hand; but the use of two, three, or four colours, always in the same relations and places, does not in the least constitute the work a study of colour, any more than the brown engravings of the Liber Studiorum; nor would the idea of colour be in general more present to the artist's mind when he was at work on one of these drawings, than when he was using pure brown in the mezzotint engraving. But the idea of space, warmth, and freshness being not successfully expressible in a single tint, and perfectly expressible by the admission of three or four, he allows himself this advantage when it is possible, without in the least embarrassing himself with the actual colour of the objects to be represented. A stone in the foreground might in nature have been cold grey, but it will be drawn nevertheless of a rich brown, because it is in the foreground; a hill in the distance might in nature be purple with heath, or golden with furze; but it will be drawn, nevertheless, of a cool grey, because it is in the distance.

This at least was the general theory,—carried out with great severity in many, both of the drawings and pictures executed by him during the period: in others more or less modified by the cautious introduction of colour, as the painter felt his liberty increasing; for the system was evidently never considered as final, or as anything more than a means of progress: the conventional, easily manageable

colour, was visibly adopted, only that his mind might be at perfect liberty to address itself to the acquirement of the first and most necessary knowledge in art—that of form. But as form, in landscape, implies vast bulk and space, the use of the tints which enabled him best to express them, was actually auxiliary to the mere drawing; and, therefore, not only permissible, but even necessary, while more brilliant or varied tints were never indulged in, except when they might be introduced without the slightest danger of diverting his mind for an instant from his principal object. And, therefore, it will be generally found in the works of this period, that exactly in proportion to the importance and general toil of the composition, is the severity of the tint; and that the play of colour begins to show itself first in slight and small drawings, where he felt that he could easily secure all that he wanted in form.

Thus the "Crossing the Brook," and such other elaborate and large compositions, are actually painted in nothing but grey, brown, and blue, with a point or two of severe local colour in the figures; but in the minor drawings, tender passages of complicated colour occur not unfrequently in easy places; and even before the year 1800 he begins to introduce it with evident joyfulness and longing in his rude and simple studies, just as a child, if it could be supposed to govern itself by a fully developed intellect, would cautiously, but with infinite pleasure, add now and then a tiny dish of fruit or other dangerous luxury to the simple order of its daily fare. Thus, in the foregrounds of his most severe drawings, we not unfrequently find him indulging in the luxury of a peacock; and it is impossible to express the joyfulness with which he seems to design its graceful form, and deepen with soft pencilling the bloom of its blue, after he has worked through the stern detail of his almost colourless drawing. A rainbow is another of his most frequently permitted indulgences; and we find him very early allowing the edges of his evening clouds to be touched with soft rose-colour or gold; while, whenever the hues of nature in anywise fall into his system, and can be caught without a dangerous departure from it, he instantly throws his whole soul into the faithful rendering of them. Thus the usual brown tones of his foreground become warmed into sudden vigour, and are varied and enhanced with indescribable

delight, when he finds himself by the shore of a moorland stream, where they truly express the stain of its golden rocks, and the darkness of its clear, Cairngorm-like pools, and the usual serenity of his aerial blue is enriched into the softness and depth of the sapphire, when it can deepen the distant slumber of some Highland lake, or temper the gloomy shadows of the evening upon its hills.

The system of his colour being thus simplified, he could address all the strength of his mind to the accumulation of facts of form; his choice of subject, and his methods of treatment, are therefore as various as his colour is simple; and it is not a little difficult to give the reader who is unacquainted with his works, an idea either of their infinitude of aims, on the one hand, or of the kind of feeling which pervades them all, on the other. No subject was too low or too high for him: we find him one day hard at work on a cock and hen, with their family of chickens in a farmyard; and bringing all the refinement of his execution into play to express the texture of the plumage; next day he is drawing the Dragon of Colchis. One hour he is much interested in a gust of wind blowing away an old woman's cap; the next, he is painting the fifth plague of Egypt. Every landscape painter before him had acquired distinction by confining his efforts to one class of subject. Hobbima painted oaks; Ruysdael, waterfalls and copses; Cuyp, river or meadow scenes in quiet afternoons; Salvator and Poussin, such kind of mountain scenery as people could conceive, who lived in towns in the seventeenth century. But I am well persuaded that if all the works of Turner, up to the year 1820, were divided into classes (as he has himself divided them in the Liber Studiorum), no preponderance could be assigned to one class over another. There is architecture, including a large number of formal "gentlemen's seats," I suppose drawings commissioned by the owners; then lowland pastoral scenery of every kind, including nearly all farming operations—ploughing, harrowing, hedging and ditching, felling trees, sheep-washing, and I know not what else; then all kinds of town life—courtyards of inns, starting of mail coaches, interiors of shops, house-buildings, fairs, elections, &c.; then all kinds of inner domestic life—interiors of rooms, studies of costumes, of still life, and heraldry, including multitudes of symbolical

vignettes; then marine scenery of every kind, full of local incident; every kind of boat and method of fishing for particular fish, being specifically drawn, round the whole coast of England—pilchard fishing at St. Ives, whiting fishing at Margate, herring at Loch Fyne; and all kinds of shipping, including studies of every separate part of the vessels, and many marine battle pieces, two in particular of Trafalgar, both of high importance,—one of the Victory after the battle, now in Greenwich Hospital; another of the Death of Nelson, in his own gallery; then all kinds of mountain scenery, some idealised into compositions, others of definite localities; together with classical compositions, Romes and Carthages and such others, by the myriad, with mythological, historical, or allegorical figures,—nymphs, monsters, and spectres; heroes and divinities.[1]

What general feeling, it may be asked incredulously, can possibly pervade all this? This, the greatest of all feelings—an utter forgetfulness of self. Throughout the whole period with which we are at present concerned, Turner appears as a man of sympathy absolutely infinite—a sympathy so all-embracing, that I know nothing but that of Shakespeare comparable with it. A soldier's wife resting by the road-side is not beneath it; Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, watching the dead bodies of her sons, not above it. Nothing can possibly be so mean as that it will not interest his whole mind, and carrying away his whole heart; nothing so great or solemn but that he can raise himself into harmony with it; and it is impossible to prophesy of him at any moment, whether, the next, he will be in laughter or in tears.

This is the root of the man's greatness; and it follows as a matter of course that this sympathy must give him a subtle power of expression, even of the characters of mere material things, such as no other painter ever possessed. The man who can best feel the difference between rudeness and tenderness in humanity, perceives also more difference between the branches of an oak and a willow than any one else would; and, therefore, necessarily, the most striking character of the drawings themselves is the speciality of whatever they represent—the thorough stiffness of what is stiff, and grace of what is graceful, and vastness of what is

[1] I shall give a *catalogue raisonnée* of all this in the third volume of "Modern Painters."

vast; but through and beyond all this, the condition of the mind of the painter himself is easily enough discoverable by comparison of a large number of the drawings. It is singularly serene and peaceful: in itself quite passionless, though entering with ease into the external passion which it contemplates. By the effort of its will it sympathises with tumult or distress, even in their extremes, but there is no tumult, no sorrow in itself, only a chastened and exquisitely peaceful cheerfulness, deeply meditative; touched, without loss of its own perfect balance, by sadness on the one side, and stooping to playfulness upon the other. I shall never cease to regret the destruction, by fire, now several years ago, of a drawing which always seemed to me to be the perfect image of the painter's mind at this period,—the drawing of Brignal Church near Rokeby, of which a feeble idea may still be gathered from the engraving (in the Yorkshire series). The spectator stands on the "Brignal banks," looking down into the glen at twilight; the sky is still full of soft rays, though the sun is gone, and the Greta glances brightly in the valley, singing its even-song; two white clouds, following each other, move without wind through the hollows of the ravine, and others lie couched on the far away moorlands; every leaf of the woods is still in the delicate air; a boy's kite, incapable of rising, has become entangled in their branches, he is climbing to recover it; and just behind it in the picture, almost indicated by it, the lowly church is seen in its secluded field between the rocks and the stream; and around it the low churchyard wall, and the few white stones which mark the resting places of those who can climb the rocks no more, nor hear the river sing as it passes.

There are many other existing drawings which indicate the same character of mind, though I think none so touching or so beautiful: yet they are not, as I said above, more numerous than those which express his sympathy with sublimer or more active scenes; but they are almost always marked by a tenderness of execution, and have a look of being beloved in every part of them, which shows them to be the truest expression of his own feelings.

One other characteristic of his mind at this period remains to be noticed—its reverence for talent in others. Not the reverence which acts upon the practices of men as if they

were the laws of nature, but that which is ready to appreciate the power, and receive the assistance, of every mind which has been previously employed in the same direction, so far as its teaching seems to be consistent with the great text-book of nature itself. Turner thus studied almost every preceding landscape painter, chiefly Claude, Poussin, Vandevelde, Loutherbourg, and Wilson. It was probably by the Sir George Beaumonts and other feeble conventionalists of the period, that he was persuaded to devote his attention to the works of these men; and his having done so will be thought, a few scores of years hence, evidence of perhaps the greatest modesty ever shown by a man of original power. Modesty at once admirable and unfortunate, for the study of the works of Vandevelde and Claude was productive of unmixed mischief to him: he spoiled many of his marine pictures, as for instance Lord Ellesmere's, by imitation of the former; and from the latter learned a false ideal, which, confirmed by the notions of Greek art prevalent in London in the beginning of this century, has manifested itself in many vulgarities in his composition pictures, vulgarities which may perhaps be best expressed by the general term "Twickenham Classicism," as consisting principally in conceptions of ancient or of rural life such as have influenced the erection of most of our suburban villas. From Nicolo Poussin and Loutherbourg he seems to have derived advantage; perhaps also from Wilson; and much in his subsequent travels from far higher men, especially Tintoret and Paul Veronese. I have myself heard him speaking with singular delight of the putting in of the beech leaves in the upper right-hand corner of Titian's Peter Martyr. I cannot in any of his works trace the slightest influence of Salvator; and I am not surprised at it, for though Salvator was a man of far higher powers than either Vandevelde or Claude, he was a wilful and gross caricaturist. Turner would condescend to be helped by feeble men, but could not be corrupted by false men. Besides, he had never himself seen classical life, and Claude was represented to him as competent authority for it. But he *had* seen mountains and torrents, and knew therefore that Salvator could not paint them.

One of the most characteristic drawings of this period fortunately bears a date, 1818, and brings us within two

years of another dated drawing, no less characteristic of what I shall henceforward call Turner's Second period. It is in the possession of Mr. Hawkesworth Fawkes of Farnley, one of Turner's earliest and truest friends; and bears the inscription, unusually conspicuous, heaving itself up and down over the eminences of the foreground—"PASSAGE OF MONT CENIS. J. M. W. TURNER, January 15th, 1820."

The scene is on the summit of the pass close to the hospice, or what seems to have been a hospice at that time,—I do not remember any such at present,—a small square-built house, built as if partly for a fortress, with a detached flight of stone steps in front of it, and a kind of drawbridge to the door. This building, about 400 or 500 yards off, is seen in a dim, ashy grey against the light, which by help of a violent blast of mountain wind has broken through the depth of clouds which hangs upon the crags. There is no sky, properly so called, nothing but this roof of drifting cloud; but neither is there any weight of darkness—the high air is too thin for it,—all savage, howling, and luminous with cold, the massy bases of the granite hills jutting out here and there grimly through the snow wreaths. There is a desolate-looking refuge on the left, with its number 16, marked on it in long ghastly figures, and the wind is drifting the snow off the roof and through its window in a frantic whirl; the near ground is all wan with half-thawed, half-trampled snow; a diligence in front, whose horses, unable to face the wind, have turned right round with fright, its passengers struggling to escape, jammed in the window; a little farther on is another carriage off the road, some figures pushing at its wheels and its driver at the horses' heads, pulling and lashing with all his strength, his lifted arm stretched out against the light of the distance, though too far off for the whip to be seen.

Now I am perfectly certain that any one thoroughly accustomed to the earlier works of the painter, and shown this picture for the first time, would be struck by two altogether new characters in it.

The first, a seeming enjoyment of the excitement of the scene, totally different from the contemplative philosophy with which it would formerly have been regarded. Every incident of motion and of energy is seized upon with

indescribable delight, and every line of the composition animated with a force and fury which are now no longer the mere expression of a contemplated external truth, but have origin in some inherent feeling in the painter's mind.

The second, that although the subject is one in itself almost incapable of colour, and although, in order to increase the wildness of the impression, all brilliant local colour has been refused even where it might easily have been introduced, as in the figures; yet in the low minor key which has been chosen, the melodies of colour have been elaborated to the utmost possible pitch, so as to become a leading, instead of a subordinate, element in the composition; the subdued warm hues of the granite promontories, the dull stone colour of the walls of the buildings, clearly opposed, even in shade, to the grey of the snow wreaths heaped against them, and the faint greens and ghastly blues of the glacier ice, being all expressed with delicacies of transition utterly unexampled in any previous drawings.

These, accordingly, are the chief characteristics of the works of Turner's second period, as distinguished from the first,—a new energy inherent in the mind of the painter, diminishing the repose and exalting the force and fire of his conceptions, and the presence of Colour, as at least an essential, and often a principal, element of design.

Not that it is impossible, or even unusual, to find drawings of serene subject, and perfectly quiet feeling, among the compositions of this period; but the repose is in them, just as the energy and tumult were in the earlier period, an external quality, which the painter images by an effort of the will: it is no longer a character inherent in himself. The "Ulleswater," in the England series, is one of those which are in most perfect peace; in the "Cowes," the silence is only broken by the dash of the boat's oars, and in the "Alnwick" by a stag drinking; but in at least nine drawings out of ten, either sky, water, or figures are in rapid motion, and the grandest drawings are almost always those which have even violent action in one or other, or in all; e. g. high force of Tees, Coventry, Llanthony, Salisbury, Llanberis, and such others.

The colour is, however, a more absolute distinction; and we must return to Mr. Fawkes's collection in order to see

how the change in it was effected. That such a change would take place at one time or other was of course to be securely anticipated, the conventional system of the first period being, as above stated, merely a means of study. But the immediate cause was the journey of the year 1820. As might be guessed from the legend on the drawing above described, "Passage of Mont Cenis, January 15th, 1820," that drawing represents what happened on the day in question to the painter himself. He passed the Alps then in the winter of 1820; and either in the previous or subsequent summer, but on the same journey, he made a series of sketches on the Rhine, in body colour, now in Mr. Fawkes's collection. Every one of those sketches is the almost instantaneous record of an *effect* of colour or atmosphere, taken strictly from nature, the drawing and the details of every subject being comparatively subordinate, and the colour nearly as principal as the light and shade had been before,—certainly the leading feature, though the light and shade are always exquisitely harmonised with it. And naturally, as the colour becomes the leading object, those times of day are chosen in which it is most lovely; and whereas before, at least five out of six of Turner's drawings represented ordinary daylight, we now find his attention directed constantly to the evening: and, for the first time, we have those rosy lights upon the hills, those gorgeous falls of sun through flaming heavens, those solemn twilights, with the blue moon rising as the western sky grows dim, which have ever since been the themes of his mightiest thoughts.

I have no doubt, that the *immediate* reason of this change was the impression made upon him by the colours of the continental skies. When he first travelled on the Continent (1800), he was comparatively a young student; not yet able to draw form as he wanted, he was forced to give all his thoughts and strength to this primary object. But now he was free to receive other impressions; the time was come for perfecting his art, and the first sunset which he saw on the Rhine taught him that all previous landscape art was vain and valueless, that in comparison with natural colour, the things that had been called paintings were mere ink and charcoal, and that all precedent and all authority must be cast away at once, and trodden under foot. He cast them away: the memories of Vandevelde and Claude were at

once weeded out of the great mind they had encumbered; they and all the rubbish of the schools together with them; the waves of the Rhine swept them away for ever; and a new dawn rose over the rocks of the Siebengebirge.

There was another motive at work, which rendered the change still more complete. His fellow artists were already conscious enough of his superior power in drawing, and their best hope was, that he might not be able to colour. They had begun to express this hope loudly enough for it to reach his ears. The engraver of one of his most important marine pictures told me, not long ago, that one day about the period in question, Turner came into his room to examine the progress of the plate, not having seen his own picture for several months. It was one of his dark early pictures, but in the foreground was a little piece of luxury, a pearly fish wrought into hues like those of an opal. He stood before the picture for some moments; then laughed, and pointed joyously to the fish;—"They say that Turner can't colour!" and turned away.

Under the force of these various impulses the change was total. *Every subject thenceforward was primarily conceived in colour;* and no engraving ever gave the slightest idea of any drawing of this period.

The artists who had any perception of the truth were in despair; the Beaumontites, classicalists, and "owl species" in general, in as much indignation as their dulness was capable of. They had deliberately closed their eyes to all nature, and had gone on inquiring "Where do you put your brown 'tree.'" A vast revelation was made to them at once, enough to have dazzled any one; but to *them*, light unendurable as incomprehensible. They "did to the moon complain," in one vociferous, unanimous, continuous "Tu whoo." Shrieking rose from all dark places at the same instant, just the same kind of shrieking that is now raised against the Pre-Raphaelites. Those glorious old Arabian Nights, how true they are! Mocking and whispering, and abuse loud and low by turns, from all the black stones beside the road, when one living soul is toiling up the hill to get the golden water. Mocking and whispering, that he may look back, and become a black stone like themselves.

Turner looked not back, but he went on in such a temper as a strong man must be in, when he is forced to walk with

his fingers in his ears. He retired into himself; he could look no longer for help, or counsel, or sympathy from any one; and the spirit of defiance in which he was forced to labour led him sometimes into violences, from which the slightest expression of sympathy would have saved him. The new energy that was upon him, and the utter isolation into which he was driven, were both alike dangerous, and many drawings of the time show the evil effects of both; some of them being hasty, wild, or experimental, and others little more than magnificent expressions of defiance of public opinion.

But all have this noble virtue—they are in everything his own: there are no more reminiscences of dead masters, no more trials of skill in the manner of Claude or Poussin; every faculty of his soul is fixed upon nature only, as he saw her, or as he remembered her.

I have spoken above of his gigantic memory: it is especially necessary to notice this, in order that we may understand the kind of grasp which a man of real imagination takes of all things that are once brought within his reach—grasp thenceforth not to be relaxed for ever.

On looking over any catalogues of his works, or of particular series of them, we shall notice the recurrence of the same subject two, three, or even many times. In any other artist this would be nothing remarkable. Probably most modern landscape painters multiply a favourite subject twenty, thirty, or sixty fold, putting the shadows and the clouds in different places, and "inventing," as they are pleased to call it, a new "effect" every time. But if we examine the successions of Turner's subjects, we shall find them either the records of a succession of impressions actually received by him at some favourite locality, or else repetitions of one impression received in early youth, and again and again realised as his increasing powers enabled him to do better justice to it. In either case we shall find them records of *seen facts; never* compositions in his room to fill up a favourite outline.

For instance, every traveller, at least every traveller of thirty years' standing, must love Calais, the place where he first felt himself in a strange world. Turner evidently loved it excessively. I have never catalogued his studies of Calais, but I remember, at this moment, five: there is first the

"Pas de Calais," a very large oil painting, which is what he saw in broad daylight as he crossed over, when he got near the French side. It is a careful study of French fishing boats running for the shore before the wind, with the picturesque old city in the distance. Then there is the "Calais Harbour" in the Liber Studiorum: that is what he saw just as he was going into the harbour,—a heavy brig warping out, and very likely to get in his way or run against the pier, and bad weather coming on. Then there is the "Calais Pier," a large painting, engraved some years ago by Mr. Lupton[1]: that is what he saw when he had landed, and ran back directly to the pier to see what had become of the brig. The weather had got still worse, the fishwomen were being blown about in a distressful manner on the pier head, and some more fishing boats were running in with all speed. Then there is the "Fortrouge," Calais: that is what he saw after he had been home to Dessein's, and dined, and went out again in the evening to walk on the sands, the tide being down. He had never seen such a waste of sands before, and it made an impression on him. The shrimp girls were all scattered over them too, and moved about in white spots on the wild shore; and the storm had lulled a little, and there was a sunset—such a sunset,—and the bars of Fortrouge seen against it, skeleton-wise. He did not paint that directly; thought over it,—painted it a long while afterwards.

Then there is the vignette in the illustrations to Scott. That is what he saw as he was going home, meditatively; and the revolving lighthouse came blazing out upon him suddenly, and disturbed him. He did not like that so much; made a vignette of it, however, when he was asked to do a bit of Calais, twenty or thirty years afterwards, having already done all the rest.

Turner never told me all this, but any one may see it if he will compare the pictures. They might, possibly, not be impressions of a single day, but of two days or three; though in all human probability they were seen just as I have stated them[2]; but they *are* records of successive

[1] The plate was, however, never published.

[2] And the more probably because Turner was never fond of staying long at any place, and was least of all likely to make a pause of two or three days at the beginning of his journey.

impressions, as plainly written as ever traveller's diary. All of them pure veracities. Therefore immortal.

I could multiply these series almost indefinitely from the rest of his works. What is curious, some of them have a kind of private mark running through all the subjects. Thus I know three drawings of Scarborough, and all of them have a starfish in the foreground: I do not remember any others of his marine subjects which have a starfish.

The other kind of repetition—the recurrence to one early impression—is however still more remarkable. In the collection of F. H. Bale, Esq., there is a small drawing of Llanthony Abbey. It is in his boyish manner, its date probably about 1795; evidently a sketch from nature, finished at home. It had been a showery day; the hills were partially concealed by the rain, and gleams of sunshine breaking out at intervals. A man was fishing in the mountain stream. The young Turner sought a place of some shelter under the bushes; made his sketch, took great pains when he got home to imitate the rain, as he best could; added his child's luxury of a rainbow; put in the very bush under which he had taken shelter, and the fisherman, a somewhat ill-jointed and long-legged fisherman, in the courtly short breeches which were the fashion of the time.

Some thirty years afterwards, with all his powers in their strongest training, and after the total change in his feelings and principles which I have endeavoured to describe, he undertook the series of "England and Wales," and in that series introduced the subject of Llanthony Abbey. And behold, he went back to his boy's sketch and boy's thought. He kept the very bushes in their places, but brought the fisherman to the other side of the river, and put him, in somewhat less courtly dress, under their shelter, instead of himself. And then he set all his gained strength and new knowledge at work on the well-remembered shower of rain, that had fallen thirty years before, to do it better. The resultant drawing[1] is one of the very noblest of his second period.

Another of the drawings of the England series, Ullswater, is the repetition of one in Mr. Fawkes's collection, which, by the method of its execution, I should conjecture to have been executed about the year 1808 or 1810: at all

[1] Vide Modern Painters, Part II. Sect. III. Chap. IV. § 14.

events, it is a very quiet drawing of the first period. The lake is quite calm; the western hills in grey shadow, the eastern massed in light. Helvellyn rising like a mist between them, all being mirrored in the calm water. Some thin and slightly evanescent cows are standing in the shallow water in front; a boat floats motionless about a hundred yards from the shore: the foreground is of broken rocks, with some lovely pieces of copse on the right and left.

This was evidently Turner's record of a quiet evening by the shore of Ulleswater, but it was a feeble one. He could not at that time render the sunset colours: he went back to it therefore in the England series, and painted it again with his new power. The same hills are there, the same shadows, the same cows,—they had stood in his mind, on the same spot, for twenty years,—the same boat, the same rocks, only the copse is cut away—it interfered with the masses of his colour: some figures are introduced bathing, and what was grey, and feeble gold in the first drawing, becomes purple, and burning rose-colour in the last.

But perhaps one of the most curious examples is in the series of subjects from Winchelsea. That in the Liber Studiorum, "Winchelsea, Sussex," bears date 1812, and its figures consist of a soldier speaking to a woman, who is resting on the bank beside the road. There is another small subject, with Winchelsea in the distance, of which the engraving bears date 1817. It has *two* women with bundles, and *two* soldiers toiling along the embankment in the plain, and a baggage waggon in the distance. Neither of these seems to have satisfied him, and at last he did another for the England series, of which the engraving bears date 1830. There is now a regiment on the march; the baggage waggon is there, having got no farther on in the thirteen years, but one of the women is tired, and has fainted on the bank; another is supporting her against her bundle, and giving her drink; a third sympathetic woman is added, and the two soldiers have stopped, and one is drinking from his canteen.

Nor is it merely of entire scenes, or of particular incidents that Turner's memory is thus tenacious. The slightest passages of colour or arrangement that have pleased him—the fork of a bough, the casting of a shadow, the fracture of a stone—will be taken up again and again, and strangely

worked into new relations with other thoughts. There is a single sketch from nature in one of the portfolios at Farnley, of a common wood-walk on the estate, which has furnished passages to no fewer than three of the most elaborate compositions in the Liber Studiorum.

I am thus tedious in dwelling on Turner's powers of memory, because I wish it to be thoroughly seen how all his greatness, all his infinite luxuriance of invention, depends on his taking possession of everything that he sees,—on his grasping all, and losing hold of nothing,—on his forgetting himself, and forgetting nothing else. I wish it to be understood how every great man paints what he sees or did see, his greatness being indeed little else than his intense sense of fact. And thus Pre-Raphaelitism and Raphaelitism, and Turnerism, are all one and the same, so far as education can influence them. They are different in their choice, different in their faculties, but all the same in this, that Raphael himself, so far as he was great, and all who preceded or followed him who ever were great, became so by painting the truths around them as they appeared to each man's own mind, not as he had been taught to see them, except by the God who made both him and them.

There is, however, one more characteristic of Turner's second period, on which I have still to dwell, especially with reference to what has been above advanced respecting the fallacy of overtoil; namely, the magnificent ease with which all is done when it is *successfully* done. For there are one or two drawings of this time which are *not* done easily. Turner had in these set himself to do a fine thing to exhibit his powers; in the common phrase, to excel himself; so sure as he does this, the work is a failure. The worst drawings that have ever come from his hands are some of this second period, on which he has spent much time and laborious thought; drawings filled with incident from one side to the other, with skies stippled into morbid blue, and warm lights set against them in violent contrast; one of Bamborough Castle, a large water-colour, may be named as an example. But the truly noble works are those in which, without effort, he has expressed his thoughts as they came, and forgotten himself; and in these the outpouring of invention is not less miraculous than the swiftness and obedience of the mighty hand that expresses it. Any one who

examines the drawings may see the evidence of this facility, in the strange freshness and sharpness of every touch of colour; but when the multitude of delicate touches, with which all the aerial tones are worked, is taken into consideration, it would still appear impossible that the drawing could have been completed with *ease*, unless we had direct evidence on the matter: fortunately, it is not wanting. There is a drawing in Mr. Fawkes's collection of a man-of-war taking in stores: it is of the usual size of those of the England series, about sixteen inches by eleven: it does not appear one of the most highly finished, but is still farther removed from slightness. The hull of a first-rate occupies nearly one-half of the picture on the right, her bows towards the spectator, seen in sharp perspective from stem to stern, with all her portholes, guns, anchors, and lower rigging elaborately detailed; there are two other ships of the line in the middle distance, drawn with equal precision; a noble breezy sea dancing against their broad bows, full of delicate drawing in its waves; a store-ship beneath the hull of the larger vessel, and several other boats, and a complicated cloudy sky. It might appear no small exertion of mind to draw the detail of all this shipping down to the smallest ropes, from memory, in the drawing-room of a mansion in the middle of Yorkshire, even if considerable time had been given for the effort. But Mr. Fawkes sat beside the painter from the first stroke to the last. Turner took a piece of blank paper one morning after breakfast, outlined his ships, finished the drawing in three hours, and went out to shoot.

Let this single fact be quietly meditated upon by our ordinary painters, and they will see the truth of what was above asserted,—that if a great thing can be done at all, it can be done easily; and let them not torment themselves with twisting of compositions this way and that, and repeating, and experimenting, and scene-shifting. If a man can compose at all, he can compose at once, or rather he must compose in spite of himself. And this is the reason of that silence which I have kept in most of my works, on the subject of Composition. Many critics, especially the architects, have found fault with me for not "teaching people how to arrange masses;" for not "attributing sufficient importance to composition." Alas! I attribute far more importance to it than they do;—so much importance, that I should just as

soon think of sitting down to teach a man how to write a Divina Commedia, or King Lear, as how to "compose," in the true sense, a single building or picture. The marvellous stupidity of this age of lecturers is, that they do not see that what they call, "principles of composition," are mere principles of common sense in everything, as well as in pictures and buildings;—A picture is to have a principal light? Yes; and so a dinner is to have a principal dish, and an oration a principal point, and an air of music a principal note, and every man a principal object. A picture is to have harmony of relation among its parts? Yes; and so is a speech well uttered, and an action well ordered, and a company well chosen, and a ragout well mixed. Composition! As if a man were not composing every moment of his life, well or ill, and would not do it instinctively in his picture as well as elsewhere, if he could. Composition of this lower or common kind is of exactly the same importance in a picture that it is in anything else,—no more. It is well that a man should say what he has to say in good order and sequence, but the main thing is to say it truly. And yet we go on preaching to our pupils as if to have a principal light was everything, and so cover our academy walls with Shacabac feasts, wherein the courses are indeed well ordered, but the dishes empty.

It is not, however, only in invention that men overwork themselves, but in execution also; and here I have a word to say to the Pre-Raphaelites specially. They are working too hard. There is evidence in failing portions of their pictures, showing that they have wrought so long upon them that their very sight has failed for weariness, and that the hand refused any more to obey the heart. And, besides this, there are certain qualities of drawing which they miss from over-carefulness. For, let them be assured, there is a great truth lurking in that common desire of men to see things done in what they call a "masterly," or "bold," or "broad," manner: a truth oppressed and abused, like almost every other in this world, but an eternal one nevertheless; and whatever mischief may have followed from men's looking for nothing else but this facility of execution, and supposing that a picture was assuredly all right if only it were done with broad dashes of the brush, still the truth remains the same:—that because it is not intended that men shall torment or weary themselves

with any earthly labour, it is appointed that the noblest results should only be attainable by a certain ease and decision of manipulation. I only wish people understood this much of sculpture, as well as of painting, and could see that the finely finished statue is, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, a far more vulgar work than that which shows rough signs of the right hand laid to the workman's hammer: but at all events, in painting it is felt by all men, and justly felt. The freedom of the lines of nature can only be represented by a similar freedom in the hand that follows them; there are curves in the flow of the hair, and in the form of the features, and in the muscular outline of the body, which can in no wise be caught but by a sympathetic freedom in the stroke of the pencil. I do not care what example is taken, be it the most subtle and careful work of Leonardo himself, there will be found a play and power and ease in the outlines, which no *slow* effort could ever imitate. And if the Pre-Raphaelites do not understand how this kind of power, in its highest perfection, may be united with the most severe rendering of all other orders of truth, and especially of those with which they themselves have most sympathy, let them look at the drawings of John Lewis.

These then are the principal lessons which we have to learn from Turner, in his second or central period of labour. There is one more, however, to be received; and that is a warning; for towards the close of it, what with doing small conventional vignettes for publishers, making showy drawings from sketches taken by other people of places he had never seen, and touching up the bad engravings from his works submitted to him almost every day,—engravings utterly destitute of animation, and which had to be raised into a specious brilliancy by scratching them over with white, spotty, lights, he gradually got inured to many conventionalities, and even falsities; and, having trusted for ten or twelve years almost entirely to his memory and invention, living I believe mostly in London, and receiving a new sensation only from the burning of the Houses of Parliament, he painted many pictures between 1830 and 1840 altogether unworthy of him. But he was not thus to close his career.

In the summer either of 1840 or 1841, he undertook another journey into Switzerland. It was then at least forty years since he had first seen the Alps; (the source

of the Arveron, in Mr. Fawkes's collection, which could not have been painted till he had seen the thing itself, bears date 1800,) and the direction of his journey in 1840 marks his fond memory of that earliest one; for, if we look over the Swiss studies and drawings executed in his first period, we shall be struck by his fondness for the pass of the St. Gothard; the most elaborate drawing in the Farnley collection is one of the Lake of Lucerne from Fluelen; and, counting the Liber Studiorum subjects, there are, to my knowledge, six compositions taken at the same period from the pass of St. Gothard, and, probably, several others are in existence. The valleys of Sallenche and Chamouni, and Lake of Geneva, are the only other Swiss scenes which seem to have made very profound impressions on him.

He returned in 1841 to Lucerne; walked up Mont Pilate on foot, crossed the St. Gothard, and returned by Lausanne and Geneva. He made a large number of coloured sketches on this journey, and realised several of them on his return. The drawings thus produced are different from all that had preceded them, and are the first which belong definitely to what I shall henceforward call his Third period.

The perfect repose of his youth had returned to his mind, while the faculties of imagination and execution appeared in renewed strength; all conventionality being done away by the force of the impression which he had received from the Alps, after his long separation from them. The drawings are marked by a peculiar largeness and simplicity of thought: most of them by deep serenity, passing into melancholy; all by a richness of colour, such as he had never before conceived. They, and the works done in following years, bear the same relation to those of the rest of his life that the colours of sunset do to those of the day; and will be recognised, in a few years more, as the noblest landscapes ever yet conceived by human intellect.

Such has been the career of the greatest painter of this century. Many a century may pass away before there rises such another; but what greatness any among us may be capable of, will, at least, be best attained by following in his path;—by beginning in all quietness and hopefulness to use whatever powers we may possess to represent the things around us as we see and feel them; trusting to the close of life to give the perfect crown to the course of its labours,

and knowing assuredly that the determination of the degree in which watchfulness is to be exalted into invention, rests with a higher will than our own. And, if not greatness, at least a certain good, is thus to be achieved; for though I have above spoken of the mission of the more humble artist, as if it were merely to be subservient to that of the antiquarian or the man of science, there is an ulterior aspect, in which it is not subservient, but superior. Every archæologist, every natural philosopher, knows that there is a peculiar rigidity of mind brought on by long devotion to logical and analytical inquiries. Weak men, giving themselves to such studies, are utterly hardened by them, and become incapable of understanding anything nobler, or even of feeling the value of the results to which they lead. But even the best men are in a sort injured by them, and pay a definite price, as in most other matters, for definite advantages. They gain a peculiar strength, but lose in tenderness, elasticity, and impressibility. The man who has gone, hammer in hand, over the surface of a romantic country, feels no longer, in the mountain ranges he has so laboriously explored, the sublimity or mystery with which they were veiled when he first beheld them, and with which they are adorned in the mind of the passing traveller. In his more informed conception, they arrange themselves like a dissected model: where another man would be awestruck by the magnificence of the precipice, he sees nothing but the emergence of a fossiliferous rock, familiarised already to his imagination as extending in a shallow stratum, over a perhaps uninteresting district; where the unlearned spectator would be touched with strong emotion by the aspect of the snowy summits which rise in the distance, he sees only the culminating points of a metamorphic formation, with an uncomfortable web of fan-like fissures radiating, in his imagination, through their centres.[1] That in the grasp he has obtained of the

[1] This state of mind appears to have been the only one which Wordsworth had been able to discern in men of science; and in disdain of which, he wrote that short-sighted passage in the Excursion, Book III. l. 165–190., which is, I think, the only one in the whole range of his works which his true friends would have desired to see blotted out. What else has been found fault with as feeble or superfluous, is not so in the intense distinctive relief which it gives to his character. But these lines are written in mere ignorance of the matter they treat; in mere want of sympathy with the men they describe: for, observe,

inner relations of all these things to the universe, and to man, that in the views which have been opened to him of natural energies such as no human mind would have ventured to conceive, and of past states of being, each in some new way bearing witness to the unity of purpose and everlastingly consistent providence of the Maker of all things, he has received reward well worthy the sacrifice, I would not for an instant deny; but the sense of the loss is not less painful to him if his mind be rightly constituted; and it would be with infinite gratitude that he would regard the man, who, retaining in his delineation of natural scenery a fidelity to the facts of science so rigid as to make his work at once acceptable and credible to the most sternly critical intellect, should yet invest its features again with the sweet veil of their daily aspect; should make them dazzling with the splendour of wandering light, and involve them in the unsearchableness of stormy obscurity; should restore to the divided anatomy its visible vitality of operation, clothe the naked crags with soft forests, enrich the mountain ruins with bright pastures, and lead the thoughts from the monotonous recurrence of the phenomena of the physical world, to the sweet interests and sorrows of human life and death.

though the passage is put into the mouth of the Solitary, it is fully confirmed, and even rendered more scornful, by the speech which follows.

LECTURES

ON

ARCHITECTURE AND PAINTING

DELIVERED AT EDINBURGH

IN

NOVEMBER, 1853

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS DRAWN BY THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

THE following Lectures are printed, as far as possible, just as they were delivered. Here and there a sentence which seemed obscure has been mended, and the passages which had not been previously written, have been, of course imperfectly, supplied from memory. But I am well assured that nothing of any substantial importance which was said in the lecture-room, is either omitted, or altered in its signification, with the exception only of a few sentences struck out from the notice of the works of Turner, in consequence of the impossibility of engraving the drawings by which they were illustrated, except at a cost which would have too much raised the price of the volume. Some elucidatory remarks have, however, been added at the close of the second and fourth Lectures, which I hope may be of more use than the passages which I was obliged to omit.

The drawings by which the Lectures on Architecture were illustrated have been carefully reduced, and well transferred to wood by Mr. Thurston Thompson. Those which were given in the course of the notices of schools of painting could not be so transferred, having been drawn in colour; and I have therefore merely had a few lines, absolutely necessary to make the text intelligible, copied from engravings.

I forgot, in preparing the second Lecture for the press, to quote a passage from Lord Lindsay's "Christian Art," illustrative of what is said in that lecture, (page 106.) respecting the energy of the mediæval republics. This passage, describing the circumstances under which the Campanile of the Duomo of Florence was built, is interesting also as noticing the universality of talent which was required of architects; and which, as I have asserted in the Addenda (p. 111.), always ought to be required of them. I do not, however, now regret the omission, as I cannot easily imagine a better preface to an essay on civil architecture than this simple statement.

"In 1332, Giotto was chosen to erect it (the campanile)

on the ground, avowedly, of the *universality* of his talents, with the appointment of Capo Maestro, or chief Architect (chief Master, I should rather write), of the Cathedral and its dependencies, a yearly salary of one hundred gold florins, and the privilege of citizenship, under the special understanding that he was not to quit Florence. His designs being approved of, the republic passed a decree in the spring of 1334, that the Campanile should be built so as to exceed in magnificence, height, and excellence of workmanship whatever in that kind had been achieved by the Greeks and Romans in the time of their utmost power and greatness. The first stone was laid, accordingly, with great pomp, on the 18th of July following, and the work prosecuted with vigour, and with such costliness, and utter disregard of expense, that a citizen of Verona, looking on, exclaimed, that the republic was taxing her strength too far, that the united resources of two great monarchs would be insufficient to complete it; a criticism which the Signoria resented by confining him for two months in prison, and afterwards conducting him through the public treasury, to teach him that the Florentines could build their whole city of marble, and not one poor steeple only, were they so inclined."

I see that "The Builder," vol. xi. page 690. has been endeavouring to inspire the citizens of Leeds with some pride of this kind respecting their town-hall. The pride would be well, but I sincerely trust the tower in question may not be built on the design there proposed. I am sorry to have to write a special criticism, but it must be remembered that the best works, by the best men living, are in this age abused without mercy by nameless critics; and it would be unjust to the public, if those who have given their names as guarantee for their sincerity never had the courage to enter a protest against the execution of designs which appear to them unworthy.

Denmark Hill,
16th April, 1854.

LECTURES

ON

ARCHITECTURE AND PAINTING

LECTURE I

I THINK myself peculiarly happy in being permitted to address the citizens of Edinburgh on the subject of architecture, for it is one which, they cannot but feel, interests them nearly. Of all the cities in the British Islands, Edinburgh is the one which presents most advantages for the display of a noble building; and which, on the other hand, sustains most injury in the erection of a commonplace or unworthy one. You are all proud of your city: surely you must feel it a duty in some sort to justify your pride; that is to say, to give yourselves a *right* to be proud of it. That you were born under the shadow of its two fantastic mountains,—that you live where from your room windows you can trace the shores of its glittering Firth, are no rightful subjects of pride. You did not raise the mountains, nor shape the shores; and the historical houses of your Canongate, and the broad battlements of your castle, reflect honour upon you only through your ancestors. Before you boast of your city, before even you venture to call it *yours*, ought you not scrupulously to weigh the exact share you have had in adding to it or adorning it, to calculate seriously the influence upon its aspect which the work of your own hands has exercised? I do not say that, even when you regard your city in this scrupulous and testing spirit, you have not considerable ground for exultation. As far as I am acquainted with modern architecture, I am aware of no streets which, in simplicity and manliness of style, or general breadth and brightness of effect, equal those of the New Town of Edinburgh. But yet I am well persuaded that as you traverse those streets, your feelings of pleasure and pride in them are much complicated with those which

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are excited entirely by the surrounding scenery. As you walk up or down George Street, for instance, do you not look eagerly for every opening to the north and south, which lets in the lustre of the Firth of Forth, or the rugged outline of the Castle Rock? Take away the sea-waves, and the dark basalt, and I fear you would find little to interest you in George Street by itself. Now I remember a city, more nobly placed even than your Edinburgh, which, instead of the valley that you have now filled by lines of railroad, has a broad and rushing river of blue water sweeping through the heart of it; which, for the dark and solitary rock that bears your castle, has an amphitheatre of cliffs crested with cypresses and olive; which, for the two masses of Arthur's Seat and the ranges of the Pentlands, has a chain of blue mountains higher than the haughtiest peaks of your Highlands; and which, for your far-away Ben Ledi and Ben More, has the great central chain of the St. Gothard Alps: and yet, as you go out of the gates, and walk in the suburban streets of that city—I mean Verona—the eye never seeks to rest on that external scenery, however gorgeous; it does not look for the gaps between the houses, as you do here: it may for a few moments follow the broken line of the great Alpine battlements; but it is only where they form a background for other battlements, built by the hand of man. There is no necessity felt to dwell on the blue river or the burning hills. The heart and eye have enough to do in the streets of the city itself; they are contented there; nay, they sometimes turn from the natural scenery, as if too savage and solitary, to dwell with a deeper interest on the palace walls that cast their shade upon the streets, and the crowd of towers that rise out of that shadow into the depth of the sky.

That is a city to be proud of, indeed; and it is this kind of architectural dignity which you should aim at, in what you add to Edinburgh or rebuild in it. For remember, you must either help your scenery or destroy it; whatever you do has an effect of one kind or the other; it is never indifferent. But, above all, remember that it is chiefly by private, not by public, effort that your city must be adorned. It does not matter how many beautiful public buildings you possess, if they are not supported by, and in harmony with, the private houses of the town. Neither the mind nor the

eye will accept a new college, or a new hospital, or a new institution, for a city. It is the Canongate, and the Princes Street, and the High Street that are Edinburgh. It is in your own private houses that the real majesty of Edinburgh must consist; and, what is more, it must be by your own personal interest that the style of the architecture which rises around you must be principally guided. Do not think that you can have good architecture merely by paying for it. It is not by subscribing liberally for a large building once in forty years that you can call up architects and inspiration.

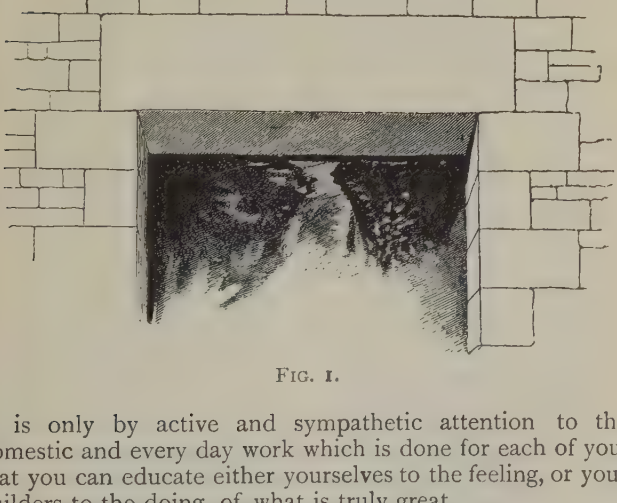

FIG. 1.

It is only by active and sympathetic attention to the domestic and every day work which is done for each of you, that you can educate either yourselves to the feeling, or your builders to the doing, of what is truly great.

Well but, you will answer, you cannot feel interested in architecture: you do not care about it, and *cannot* care about it. I know you cannot. About such architecture as is built now-a-days, no mortal ever did or could care. You do not feel interested in *hearing* the same thing over and over again;—why do you suppose you can feel interested *in seeing* the same thing over and over again, were that thing even the best and most beautiful in the world? Now, you all know the kind of window which you usually build in

Edinburgh: here (*fig.* 1.) is an example of the head of one, a massy lintel of a single stone, laid across from side to side, with bold square-cut jambs—in fact, the simplest form it is possible to build. It is by no means a bad form; on the contrary, it is very manly and vigorous, and has a certain dignity in its utter refusal of ornament. But I cannot say it is entertaining. How many windows precisely of this form do you suppose there are in the New Town of Edinburgh? I have not counted them all through the town, but I counted them this morning along this very Queen Street, in which your Hall is; and on the one side of that street, there are of these windows, absolutely similar to this example, and altogether devoid of any relief by decoration, six hundred and seventy-eight.[1] And your decorations are just as monotonous as your simplicities. How many Corinthian and Doric columns do you think there are in your banks, and post-offices, institutions, and I know not what else, one exactly like another?—and yet you expect to be interested! Nay, but, you will answer me again, we see sunrises and sunsets, and violets and roses, over and over again, and we do not tire of *them*. What! did you ever see one sunrise like another? does not God vary his clouds for you every morning and every night? though, indeed, there is enough in the disappearing and appearing of the great orb above the rolling of the world, to interest all of us, one would think, for as many times as we shall see it; and yet the aspect of it is changed for us daily. You see violets and roses often, and are not tired of them. True! but you did not often see two roses alike, or, if you did, you took care not to put them beside each other in the same nosegay, for fear your nosegay should be uninteresting; and yet you think you can put 150,000 square windows side by side in the same streets, and still be interested by them. Why, if I were to say the same thing over and over again, for the single hour you are going to let me talk to you, would you listen to me? and yet you let your architects *do* the same thing over and over again for three centuries, and expect to be interested by their architecture; with a farther disadvantage on the side of the builder, as compared with the speaker, that my wasted words would cost you but

[1] Including York Place, and Picardy Place, but not counting any window which has mouldings.

little, but his wasted stones have cost you no small part of your incomes.

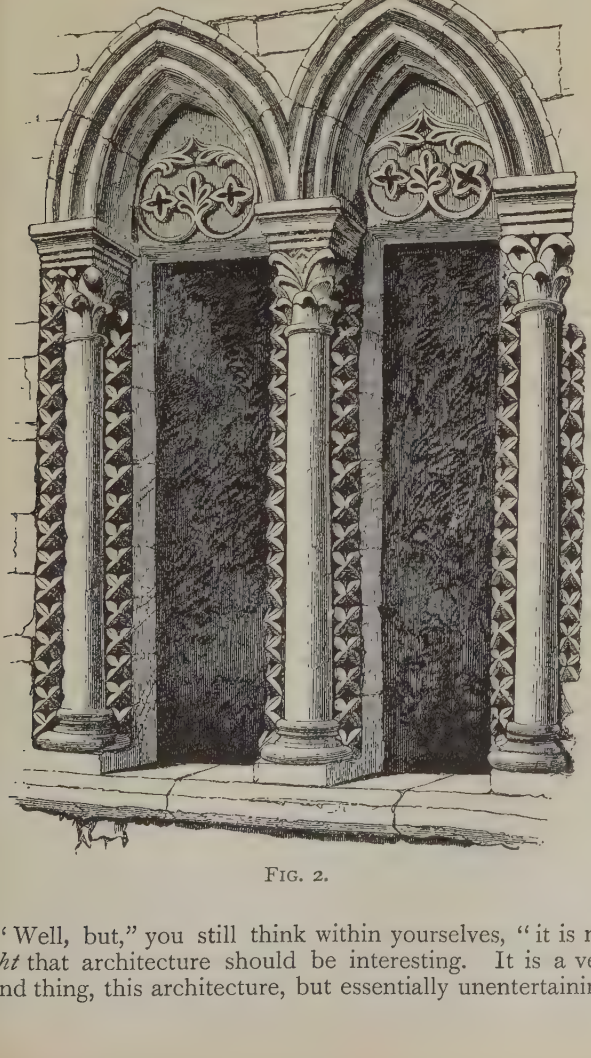

Fig. 2.

"Well, but," you still think within yourselves, "it is not *right* that architecture should be interesting. It is a very grand thing, this architecture, but essentially unentertaining.

It is its duty to be dull, it is monotonous by law: it cannot be correct and yet amusing."

Believe me, it is not so. All things that are worth doing in art, are interesting and attractive when they are done. There is no law of right which consecrates dulness. The proof of a thing's being right is, that it has power over the heart; that it excites us, wins us, or helps us. I do not say that it has influence over all, but it has over a large class; one kind of art being fit for one class, and another for another; and there is no goodness in art which is independent of the power of pleasing. Yet, do not mistake me. I do not mean that there is no such thing as neglect of the best art, or delight in the worst, just as many men neglect nature, and feed upon what is artificial and base; but I mean, that all good art has the *capacity of pleasing*, if people will attend to it; that there is no law against its pleasing; but, on the contrary, something wrong either in the spectator or the art, when it ceases to please. Now therefore, if you feel that your present school of architecture is unattractive to you, I say there is something wrong either in the architecture or in you; and I trust you will not think I mean to flatter you when I tell you, that the wrong is *not* in you, but in the architecture. Look at this for a moment (*fig.* 2.); it is a window actually existing—a window of an English domestic building[1]—a window built six hundred years ago. You will not tell me you have no pleasure in looking at this; or that you could not, by any possibility, become interested in the art which produced it; or that, if every window in your streets were of some such form, with perpetual change in their ornaments, you would pass up and down the street with as much indifference as now, when your windows are of *this* form (*fig.* 1.). Can you for an instant suppose that the architect was a greater or wiser man who built this than he who built that? or that in the arrangement of these dull and monotonous stones there is more wit and sense than you can penetrate? Believe me, the wrong is not in you; you would all like the best things best, if you only saw them. What is wrong in you is your temper, not your taste; your patient and trustful temper, which lives

[1] Oakham Castle. I have enlarged this illustration from Mr. Hudson Turner's admirable work on the domestic architecture of England.

in houses whose architecture it takes for granted, and subscribes to public edifices from which it derives no enjoyment.

"Well, but what are we to do?" you will say to me; we cannot make architects of ourselves. Pardon me, you can —and you ought. Architecture is an art for all men to learn, because all are concerned with it; and it is so simple, that there is no excuse for not being acquainted with its primary rules, any more than for ignorance of grammar or of spelling, which are both of them far more difficult sciences. Far less trouble than is necessary to learn how to play chess, or whist, or golf, tolerably,—far less than a schoolboy takes to win the meanest prize of the passing year, would acquaint you with all the main principles of the construction of a Gothic cathedral, and I believe you would hardly find the study less amusing. But be that as it may, there are one or two broad principles which need only be stated to be understood and accepted; and those I mean to lay before you, with your permission, before you leave this room.

You must all, of course, have observed that the principal distinctions between existing styles of architecture depend on their methods of roofing any space, as a window or door for instance, or a space between pillars; that is to say, that the character of Greek architecture, and of all that is derived from it, depends on its roofing a space with a single stone laid from side to side; the character of Roman architecture, and of all derived from it, depends on its roofing spaces with round arches; and the character of Gothic architecture depends on its roofing spaces with pointed arches, or gables. I need not, of course, in any way follow out for you the mode in which the Greek system of architecture is derived from the horizontal lintel; but I ought perhaps to explain, that by Roman architecture I do not mean that spurious condition of temple form which was nothing more than a luscious imitation of the Greek; but I mean that architecture in which the Roman spirit truly manifested itself, the magnificent vaultings of the aqueduct and the bath, and the colossal heaping of the rough stones in the arches of the amphitheatre; an architecture full of expression of gigantic power and strength of will, and from which are directly derived all our most impressive early buildings,

called, as you know, by various antiquaries, Saxon, Norman or Romanesque. Now the first point I wish to insist upon is, that the Greek system, considered merely as a piece of construction, is weak and barbarous compared with the two others. For instance, in the case of a large window or door such as *fig.* 1., if you have at your disposal a single large and long stone you may indeed roof it in the Greek manner, as you have done here, with comparative security; but it is always expensive to obtain and to raise to their place stones of this large size, and in many places nearly impossible to obtain them at all: and if you have not such stones, and still insist upon roofing the space in the Greek way, that is to say, upon having a square window, you must do it by the miserably feeble adjustment of bricks, *fig.* 3.[1] You are well aware, of course, that this latter is the usual way in which such windows are now built in England; you are fortunate enough here in the north to be able to obtain single stones, and this circumstance alone gives a considerable degree of grandeur to your buildings. But in all cases, and however built, you cannot but see in a moment that this cross bar is weak and imperfect. It may be strong enough for all immediate intents and purposes, but it is not so strong as it might be: however well the house is built, it will still not stand so long as if it had been better constructed; and there is hardly a day passes but you may see some rent or flaw in bad buildings of this kind. You may see one whenever you choose, in one of your most costly, and most ugly buildings, the great church with the dome, at the end of George Street. I think I never saw a building with a principal entrance so utterly ghastly and oppressive; and it is as weak as it is ghastly. The huge horizontal lintel above the door is already split right through. But you are not aware of a thousandth part of the evil: the pieces of building that you see are all carefully done; it is in the parts that are to be concealed by paint and plaster that the bad building of the day is thoroughly committed. The main mischief lies in the strange devices that are used to support the long horizontal cross beams of our larger apartments and shops, and the framework

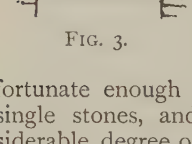

FIG. 3.

[1] On this subject, see "The Builder," vol. xi. p. 709.

unseen walls; girders and ties of cast iron, and props and wedges, and laths nailed and bolted together, on marvellously scientific principles; so scientific, that every now and then, when some tender reparation is undertaken by the unconscious householder, the whole house crashes into a heap of ruin, so total, that the jury which sits on the bodies of the inhabitants cannot tell what has been the matter with it, and returns a dim verdict of accidental death. Did you read the account of the proceedings at the Crystal Palace at Sydenham the other day? Some dozen of men crushed up among the splinters of the scaffolding in an instant, nobody knew why. All the engineers declare the scaffolding to have been erected on the best principles,—that the fall of it is as much a mystery as if it had fallen from heaven, and were all meteoric stones. The jury go to Sydenham and look at the heap of shattered bolts and girders, and come back as wise as they went. Accidental death! Yes verily; the lives of all those dozen of men had been hanging for months at the mercy of a flaw in an inch or two of cast iron. Very accidental indeed! Not the less pitiable. I grant it not to be an easy thing to raise scaffolding to the height of the Crystal Palace without incurring some danger, but that is no reason why your houses should all be nothing but scaffolding. The common system of support of walls over shops is now nothing but permanent scaffolding; part of iron, part of wood, part of brick; in its skeleton state awful to behold; the weight of three or four stories of wall resting sometimes on two or three pillars of the size of gas pipes, sometimes on a single cross beam of wood, laid across from party wall to party wall in the Greek manner. I have a vivid recollection at this moment of a vast heap of splinters in the Borough Road, close to St. George's, Southwark, in the road between my own house and London. I had passed it the day before, a goodly shop front, and sufficient house above, with a few repairs undertaken in the shop before opening a new business. The master and mistress had found it dusty that afternoon, and went out to tea. When they came back in the evening, they found their whole house in the form of a heap of bricks blocking the roadway, with a party of men digging out their cook. But I do not insist on casualities like these, disgraceful to us as they are, for it is,

of course, perfectly possible to build a perfectly secure house or a secure window in the Greek manner; but the simple fact is, that in order to obtain in the cross lintel the same amount of strength which you can obtain in a pointed arch, you must go to an immensely greater cost in stone or in labour. Stonehenge is strong enough, but it takes some trouble to build in the manner of Stonehenge: and Stonehenge itself is not so strong as an arch of the Colosseum.

Fig. 4.

You could not raise a circle of four Stonehenges, one over the other, with safety; and as it is, more of the cross-stones are fallen upon the plain of Sarum than arches rent away, except by the hand of man, from the mighty circle of Rome. But I waste words;—your own common sense must show you in a moment that this is a weak form; and there is not at this instant a single street in London where some house could not be pointed out with a flaw running through its brickwork, and repairs rendered necessary in consequence, merely owing to the adoption of this bad form; and that our builders know so well, that in myriads of instances you find them actually throwing concealed arches above the horizontal lintels to take the weight off them; and the gabled decoration at the top of some Palladian windows, is merely the ornamental form resulting

from a bold device of the old Roman builders to effect the same purpose.

But there is a farther reason for our adopting the pointed arch than its being the strongest form; it is also the most beautiful form in which a window or door-head can be built. Not the most beautiful because it is the strongest; but most beautiful, because its form is one of those which, as we know by its frequent occurrence in the work of nature around us, has been appointed by the Deity to be an everlasting source of pleasure to the human mind.

Gather a branch from any of the trees or flowers to which the earth owes its principal beauty. You will find that every one of its leaves is terminated, more or less, in the form of the pointed arch; and to that form owes its grace and character. I will take, for instance, a spray of the tree which so gracefully adorns your Scottish glens and crags—there is no lovelier in the world—the common ash. Here is a sketch of the cluster of leaves which form the extremity of one of its young shoots (*fig.* 4.); and, by the way, it will furnish us with an interesting illustration of another error in modern architectural systems. You know how fond modern architects, like foolish modern politicians, are of their equalities and similarities; how necessary they think it that each part of a building should be like every other part. Now Nature abhors equality and similitude, just as much as foolish men love them. You will find that the ends of the shoots of the ash are composed of four[1] green stalks bearing leaves, springing in the form of a cross, if seen from above, as in *fig.* 5., and at first you will suppose the four arms of the cross are equal. But look more closely, and you will find that two opposite arms or stalks have only five leaves each, and the other two have seven, or else, two have seven, and the other two nine; but always one pair of stalks has two leaves more than the other pair. Sometimes the tree gets a little puzzled, and forgets which is to be the

Fig. 5.

[1] Sometimes of six; that is to say, they spring in pairs; only the two uppermost pairs, sometimes the three uppermost, spring so close together as to appear one cluster.

longest stalk, and begins with a stem for seven leaves where it should have nine, and then recollects itself at the last minute, and puts on another leaf in a great hurry, and so produces a stalk with eight leaves; but all this care it takes merely to keep itself out of equalities; and all its grace and power of pleasing are owing to its doing so, together with the lovely curves in which its stalks, thus arranged, spring from the main bough. *Fig.* 5. is a plan of their arrangement merely, but *fig.* 4. is the way in which you are most likely to

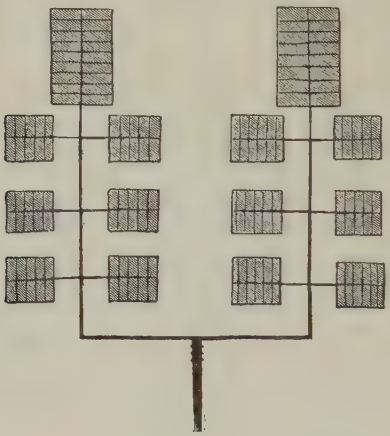

Fig. 6.

see them: and observe, they spring from the stalk *precisely as a Gothic vaulted roof springs*, each stalk representing a rib of the roof, and the leaves its crossing stones; and the beauty of each of those leaves is altogether owing to its terminating in the Gothic form, the pointed arch. Now do you think you would have liked your ash trees as well, if Nature had taught them Greek, and shown them how to grow according to the received Attic architectural rules of right? I will try you. Here is a cluster of ash leaves, which I have grown expressly for you on Greek principles (*fig.* 6.). How do you like it?

Observe, I have played you no trick in this comparison. It is perfectly fair in all respects. I have merely substituted

for the beautiful spring of the Gothic vaulting in the ash bough, a cross lintel, and then, in order to raise the leaves to the same height, I introduce vertical columns, and I make the leaves square-headed instead of pointed, and their lateral ribs at right angles with the central rib, instead of sloping from it. I have, indeed, only given you two boughs instead of four; because the perspective of the crossing ones could not have been given without confusing the figure; but I imagine you have quite enough of them as it is.

Nay, but some of you instantly answer, if we had been as long accustomed to square-leaved ash trees as we have been to sharp-leaved ash trees, we should like them just as well. Do not think it. Are you not much more accustomed to grey whinstone and brown sandstone than you are to rubies or emeralds? and yet will you tell me you think them as beautiful? Are you not more accustomed to the ordinary voices of men than to the perfect accents of sweet singing? yet do you not instantly declare the song to be loveliest? Examine well the channels of your admiration, and you will find that they are, in verity, as unchangeable as the channels of your heart's blood; that just as by the pressure of a bandage, or by unwholesome and perpetual action of some part of the body, that blood may be wasted or arrested, and in its stagnancy cease to nourish the frame, or in its disturbed flow affect it with incurable disease, so also admiration itself may, by the bandages of fashion, bound close over the eyes and the arteries of the soul, be arrested in its natural pulse and healthy flow; but that wherever the artificial pressure is removed, it will return into that bed which has been traced for it by the finger of God.

Consider this subject well, and you will find that custom has indeed no real influence upon our feelings of the beautiful, except in dulling and checking them; that is to say, it will and does, as we advance in years, deaden in some degree our enjoyment of all beauty, but it in no wise influences our determination of what is beautiful and what is not. You see the broad blue sky every day over your heads; but you do not for that reason determine blue to be less or more beautiful than you did at first; you are unaccustomed to see stones as blue as the sapphire, but you do not for that reason think the sapphire less beautiful than other stones. The blue colour is everlastingly appointed by the Deity to be a source

of delight; and whether seen perpetually over your head, or crystallised once in a thousand years into a single and incomparable stone, your acknowledgment of its beauty is equally natural, simple, and instantaneous. Pardon me for engaging you in a metaphysical discussion; for it is necessary to the establishment of some of the greatest of all architectural principles that I should fully convince you of this great truth, and that I should quite do away with the various objections to it, which I suppose must arise in your minds. Of these there is one more which I must briefly meet. You know how much confusion has been introduced into the subject of criticism, by reference to the power of Association over the human heart; you know how often it has been said that custom must have something to do with our ideas of beauty, because it endears so many objects to the affections. But, once for all, observe that the powers of association and of beauty are two entirely distinct powers,—as distinct, for instance, as the forces of gravitation and electricity. These forces may act together, or may neutralise one another, but are not for that reason to be supposed the same force; and the charm of association will sometimes enhance, and sometimes entirely overpower, that of beauty; but you must not confound the two together. You love many things because you are accustomed to them, and are pained by many things because they are strange to you; but that does not make the accustomed sight more beautiful, or the strange one less so. The well known object may be dearer to you, or you may have discovered charms in it which others cannot; but the charm was there before you discovered it, only needing time and love to perceive it. You love your friends and relations more than all the world beside, and may perceive beauties in their faces which others cannot perceive; but you feel that you would be ridiculous in allowing yourselves to think them the most beautiful persons in the world: you acknowledge that the real beauty of the human countenance depends on fixed laws of form and expression, and not on the affection you bear to it, or the degree in which you are familiarised with it: and so does the beauty of all other existences.

Now, therefore, I think that, without the risk of any farther serious objection occurring to you, I may state what I believe to be the truth,—that beauty has been appointed

by the Deity to be one of the elements by which the human soul is continually sustained; it is therefore to be found more or less in all natural objects, but in order that we may not satiate ourselves with it, and weary of it, it is rarely granted to us in its utmost degrees. When we see it in those utmost degrees, we are attracted to it strongly, and remember it long, as in the case of singularly beautiful scenery, or a beautiful countenance. On the other hand, absolute ugliness is admitted as rarely as perfect beauty; but degrees of it more or less distinct are associated with whatever has the nature of death and sin, just as beauty is associated with what has the nature of virtue and of life.

This being so, you see that when the relative beauty of any particular forms has to be examined, we may reason, from the forms of nature around us, in this manner:– what nature does generally, is sure to be more or less beautiful; what she does rarely, will either be *very* beautiful, or absolutely ugly; and we may again easily determine, if we are not willing in such a case to trust our feelings, which of these is indeed the case, by this simple rule, that if the rare occurrence is the result of the complete fulfilment of a natural law, it will be beautiful; if of the violation of a natural law, it will be ugly. For instance, a sapphire is the result of the complete and perfect fulfilment of the laws of aggregation in the earth of alumina, and it is therefore beautiful; more beautiful than clay, or any other of the conditions of that earth. But a square leaf on any tree would be ugly, being a violation of the laws of growth in trees[1], and we ought to feel it so.

Now then, I proceed to argue in this manner from what we see in the woods and fields around us; that as they are evidently meant for our delight, and as we always feel them to be beautiful, we may assume that the forms into which their leaves are cast are indeed types of beauty, not of extreme or perfect, but average beauty. And finding that they invariably terminate more or less in pointed arches, and are not square-headed, I assert the pointed arch to be one of the forms most fitted for perpetual contemplation by the

[1] I am at present aware only of one tree, the tulip tree, which has an exceptional form, and which, I doubt not, every one will admit, loses much beauty in consequence. All other leaves, as far as I know, have the round or pointed arch in the form of the extremities of their foils.

human mind; that it is one of those which never weary, however often repeated; and that therefore, being both the strongest in structure, and a beautiful form (while the square head is both weak in structure, and an ugly form), we are unwise ever to build in any other.

Here, however, I must anticipate another objection. It may be asked why we are to build only the tops of the windows pointed,—why not follow the leaves, and point them at the bottom also?

For this simple reason, that, while in architecture you are continually called upon to do what may be *unnecessary* for the sake of beauty, you are never called upon to do what is *inconvenient* for the sake of beauty. You want the level window sill to lean upon, or to allow the window to open on a balcony; the eye and the common sense of the beholder require this necessity to be met before any laws of beauty are thought of; and besides this, there is in the sill no necessity for the pointed arch as a bearing form; on the contrary, it would give an idea of weak support for the sides of the window, and therefore is at once rejected; only I beg of you particularly to observe that the level sill, although useful, and therefore admitted, does not therefore become beautiful; the eye does not like it so well as the top of the window, nor does the sculptor like to attract the eye to it; his richest mouldings, traceries, and sculptures are all reserved for the top of the window, they are sparingly granted to its horizontal base. And farther, observe, that when neither the convenience of the sill, nor the support of the structure, are any more of moment, as in small windows and traceries, you instantly *have* the point given to the bottom of the window. Do you recollect the west window of your own Dumblane Abbey? If you look in any common guide-book, you will find it pointed out as peculiarly beautiful,—it is acknowledged to be beautiful by the most careless observer. And why beautiful? Look at it (*fig.* 7.). Simply because in its great contours it has the form of a forest leaf, and because in its decoration it has used nothing but forest leaves. The sharp and expressive moulding which surrounds it is a very interesting example of one used to an enormous extent by the builders of the early English Gothic, usually in the form seen in *fig.* 2. above, composed of clusters of four sharp leaves each, originally produced by

sculpturing the sides of a four-sided pyramid, and afterwards brought more or less into a true image of leaves, but deriving all its beauty from the botanical form. In the present

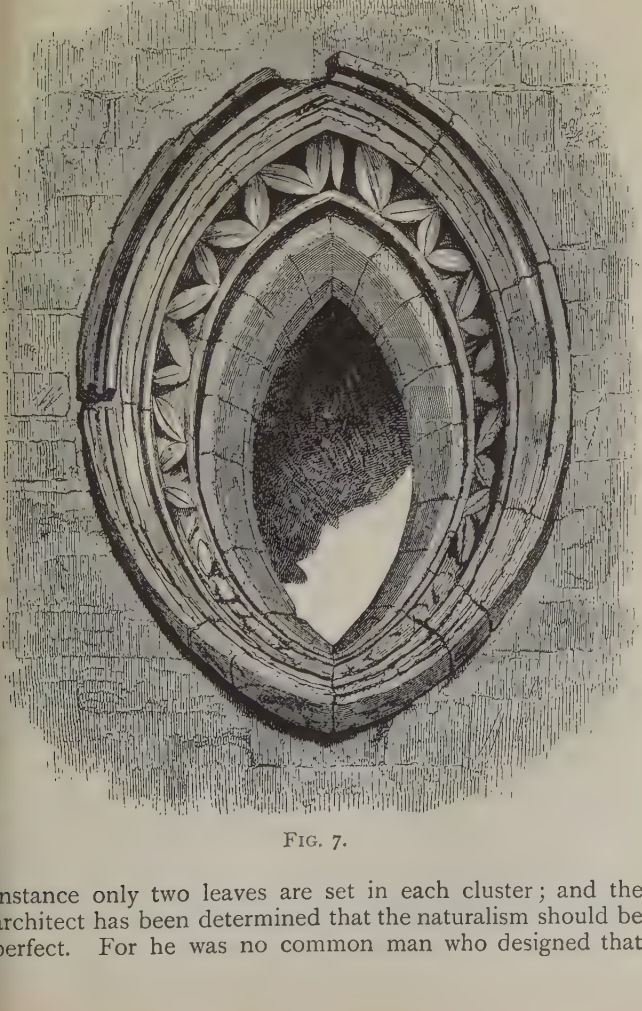

Fig. 7.

instance only two leaves are set in each cluster; and the architect has been determined that the naturalism should be perfect. For he was no common man who designed that

cathedral of Dumblane. I know not anything so perfect in its simplicity, and so beautiful, as far as it reaches, in all the Gothic with which I am acquainted. And just in proportion to his power of mind, that man was content to work under Nature's teaching; and instead of putting a merely formal dogtooth, as everybody else did at the time, he went down to the woody bank of the sweet river beneath the rocks on which he was building, and he took up a few of the fallen leaves that lay by it, and he set them in his arch, side by side, for ever. And, look—that he might show you he had done this,—he has made them all of different sizes, just as they lay; and that you might not by any chance miss noticing the variety, he has put a great broad one at the top, and then a little one turned the wrong way, next to it, so that you must be blind indeed if you do not understand his meaning. And the healthy change and playfulness of this just does in the stone-work what it does on the tree boughs, and is a perpetual refreshment and invigoration; so that, however long you gaze at this simple ornament —and none can be simpler, a village mason could carve it all round the window in a few hours—you are never weary of it, it seems always new.

It is true that oval windows of this form are comparatively rare in Gothic work, but, as you well know, circular or wheel windows are used constantly, and in most traceries the apertures are curved and pointed as much at the bottom as the top. So that I believe you will now allow me to proceed upon the assumption, that the pointed arch is indeed the best form into which the head either of door or window can be thrown, considered as a means of sustaining weight above it. How these pointed arches ought to be grouped and decorated, I shall endeavour to show you in my next lecture. Meantime I must beg of you to consider farther some of the general points connected with the structure of the roof.

I am sure that all of you must readily acknowledge the charm which is imparted to any landscape by the presence of cottages; and you must over and over again have paused at the wicket gate of some cottage garden, delighted by the simple beauty of the honeysuckle porch and latticed window. Has it ever occurred to you to ask the question, what effect the cottage would have upon your feelings if it had *no roof*?

no visible roof, I mean;—if instead of the thatched slope, in which the little upper windows are buried deep, as in a nest of straw—or the rough shelter of its mountain shales—or warm colouring of russet tiles—there were nothing but a flat leaden top to it, making it look like a large packing-case with windows in it? I don't think the rarity of such a sight would make you feel it to be beautiful; on the contrary, if you think over the matter you will find that you actually do owe, and ought to owe, a great part of your pleasure in all cottage scenery, and in all the inexhaustible imagery of literature which is founded upon it, to the conspicuousness of the cottage roof—to the subordination of the cottage itself to its covering, which leaves, in nine cases out of ten, really more roof than anything else. It is, indeed, not so much the whitewashed walls—nor the flowery garden—nor the rude fragments of stones set for steps at the door—nor any other picturesqueness of the building which interest you, so much as the grey bank of its heavy eaves, deep-cushioned with green moss and golden stonecrop. And there is a profound, yet evident, reason for this feeling. The very soul of the cottage—the essence and meaning of it—are in its roof; it is that, mainly, wherein consists its shelter; that, wherein it differs most completely from a cleft in rocks or bower in woods. It is in its thick impenetrable coverlid of close thatch that its whole heart and hospitality are concentrated. Consider the difference, in sound, of the expressions "beneath my roof" and "within my walls,"—consider whether you would be best sheltered, in a shed, with a stout roof sustained on corner posts, or in an inclosure of four walls without a roof at all,—and you will quickly see how important a part of the cottage the roof must always be to the mind as well as to the eye, and how, from seeing it, the greatest part of our pleasure must continually arise.

Now, do you suppose that which is so all-important in a cottage, can be of small importance in your own dwelling-house? Do you think that by any splendour of architecture—any height of stories—you can atone to the mind for the loss of the aspect of the roof. It is vain to say you take the roof for granted? You may as well say you take a man's kindness for granted, though he neither looks nor speaks kindly. You may know him to be kind in reality, but you will not like him so well as if he spoke and looked kindly

also. And whatever external splendour you may give your houses, you will always feel there is something wanting, unless you see their roofs plainly. And this especially in the north. In southern architecture the roof is of far less importance; but here the soul of domestic building is in the largeness and conspicuousness of the protection against the ponderous snow and driving sleet. You may make the façade of the square pile, if the roof be not seen, as handsome as you please,—you may cover it with decoration,—but there will always be a heartlessness about it, which you will not know how to conquer; above all, a perpetual difficulty in finishing the wall at top, which will require all kinds of strange inventions in parapets and pinnacles for its decoration, and yet will never look right.

Now, I need not tell you that, as it is desirable, for the sake of the effect upon the mind, that the roof should be visible, so the best and most natural form of roof in the north is that which will render it *most* visible, namely, the steep gable: the best and most natural, I say, because this form not only throws off snow and rain most completely, and dries fastest, but obtains the greatest interior space within walls of a given height, removes the heat of the sun most effectually from the upper rooms, and affords most space for ventilation.

You have then, observe, two great principles, as far as northern architecture is concerned; first, that the pointed arch is to be the means by which the weight of the wall or roof is to be sustained; secondly, that the steep gable is the form most proper for the roof itself. And now observe this most interesting fact, that all the loveliest Gothic architecture in the world is based on the group of lines composed of the pointed arch and the gable. If you look at the beautiful apse of Amiens Cathedral—a work justly celebrated over all Europe—you will find it formed merely of a series of windows surmounted by pure gables of open work. If you look at the transept porches of Rouen, or at the great and celebrated porch of the cathedral of Rheims, or at that of Strasbourg, Bayeux, Amiens, or Peterborough, still you will see that these lovely compositions are nothing more than richly decorated forms of gable over pointed arch. But more than this, you must be all well aware how fond our best architectural artists are of the street effects of

foreign cities; and even those now present who have not personally visited any of the continental towns must remember, I should think, some of the many interesting drawings by Mr. Prout, Mr. Nash, and other excellent draughtsmen, which have for many years adorned our exhibitions. Now, the principal charm of all those continental street effects is dependent on the houses having high-pitched gable roofs. In the Netherlands, and Northern France, where the material for building is brick or stone, the fronts of the stone gables are raised above the roofs, and you have magnificent and grotesque ranges of steps or curves decorated with various ornaments, succeeding one another in endless perspective along the streets of Antwerp, Ghent, or Brussels. In Picardy and Normandy, again, and many towns of Germany, where the material for building is principally wood, the roof is made to project over the gables, fringed with a beautifully carved cornice, and casting a broad shadow down the house front. This

Fig. 8.

is principally seen at Abbeville, Rouen, Lisieux, and others of the older towns of France. But, in all cases, the effect of the whole street depends on the prominence of the gables; not only of the fronts towards the streets, but of the sides also, set with small garret or dormer windows, each of the most fantastic and beautiful form, and crowned with a little spire or pinnacle. Wherever there is a little winding stair, or projecting bow window, or any other irregularity of form, the steep ridges shoot into turrets and small spires, as in *fig.* 8.[1], each in its turn crowned by a fantastic ornament, covered with curiously shaped slates or shingles, or crested with long fringes of rich ironwork, so that, seen from above and from a distance, the intricate grouping of the roofs of a French city is no less interesting than its actual streets; and in the streets themselves, the masses of broad shadow which the roofs form against the sky, are a most important background to the bright and sculptured surfaces of the walls.

Finally. I need not remind you of the effect upon the northern mind which has always been produced by the heaven-pointing spire, nor of the theory which has been founded upon it of the general meaning of Gothic architecture as expressive of religious aspiration. In a few minutes, you may ascertain the exact value of that theory, and the degree in which it is true.

The first tower of which we hear as built upon the earth, was certainly built in a species of aspiration; but I do not suppose that any one here will think it was a religious one. "Go to now. Let us build a tower whose top may reach unto heaven." From that day to this, whenever men have become skilful architects at all, there has been a tendency in them to build high; not in any religious feeling, but in mere exuberance of spirit and power—as they dance or sing—with a certain mingling of vanity—like the feeling in which a child builds a tower of cards; and, in nobler instances, with also a strong sense of, and delight in the majesty, height, and strength of the building itself, such as we have in that of a lofty tree or a peaked mountain. Add to this instinct the frequent necessity of points of elevation for watch-towers, or of points of offence, as in towers built on the ramparts of cities, and, finally, the need of elevations

[1] This figure is copied from Prout.

for the transmission of sound, as in the Turkish minaret and Christian belfry, and you have, I think, a sufficient explanation of the tower-building of the world in general. Look through your Bibles only, and collect the various expressions with reference to tower-building there, and you will have a very complete idea of the spirit in which it is for the most part undertaken. You begin with that of Babel; then you remember Gideon beating down the Tower of Penuel, in order more completely to humble the pride o the men of the city; you remember the defence of the Tower of Shechem against Abimelech, and the death of Abimelech by the casting of a stone from it by a woman's hand; you recollect the husbandman building a tower in his vineyard, and the beautiful expressions in Solomon's Song,—"The tower of Lebanon, which looketh towards Damascus;" "I am a wall, and my breasts like towers;"—you recollect the Psalmist's expressions of love and delight, "Go ye round about Jerusalem; tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks; consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following." You see in all these cases how completely the tower is a subject of human pride, or delight, or defence, not in anywise associated with religious sentiment; the towers of Jerusalem being named in the same sentence, not with her temple, but with her bulwarks and palaces. And thus, when the tower is in reality connected with a place of worship, it was generally done to add to its magnificence, but not to add to its religious expression. And over the whole of the world, you have various species of elevated buildings, the Egyptian pyramid, the Indian and Chinese pagoda, the Turkish minaret, and the Christian belfry,—all of them raised either to make a show from a distance, or to cry from, or swing bells in, or hang them round, or for some other very human reason. Thus, when the good people of Beauvais were building their cathedral, that of Amiens, then just completed, had excited the admiration of all France, and the people of Beauvais, in their jealousy and determination to beat the people of Amiens, set to work to build a tower to their own cathedral as high as they possibly could. They built it so high that it tumbled down, and they were never able to finish their cathedral at all—it stands a wreck to this day. But you will not, I should think, imagine this to have been done in heavenward aspiration. Mind, however,

I don't blame the people of Beauvais, except for their bad building. I think their desire to beat the citizens of Amiens a most amiable weakness, and only wish I could see the citizens of Edinburgh and Glasgow inflamed with the same emulation, building Gothic towers [1] instead of manufactory chimneys; only do not confound a feeling which, though healthy and right, may be nearly analogous to that in which you play a cricket-match, with any feeling allied to your hope of heaven.

Such being the state of the case with respect to tower-building in general, let me follow for a few minutes the changes which occur in the towers of northern and southern architects.

Many of us are familiar with the ordinary form of the Italian bell-tower or campanile. From the eighth century to the thirteenth there was little change in that form [2]: four-square, rising high and without tapering into the air, story above story, they stood like giants in the quiet fields beside the piles of the basilica or the Lombardic church, in this form (*fig.* 9.), tiled at the top in a flat gable, with open arches below, and fewer and fewer arches on each inferior story, down to the bottom. It is worth while noting the difference in form between these and the towers built for military service. The latter were built as in *fig.* 10., projecting vigorously at the top over a series of brackets or machicolations, with very small windows, and no decoration below. Such towers as these were attached to every important palace in the cities of Italy, and stood in great circles—troops of towers—around their external walls: their ruins still frown along the crests of every promontory of the Apennines, and are seen from far away in the great Lombardic plain, from distances of half-a-day's journey, dark against the amber sky of the horizon. These are of course now built no more, the changed methods of modern warfare having cast them into entire disuse; but the belfry or campanile has had a very different influence on European architecture. Its form in

[1] I did not, at the time of the delivery of these lectures, know how many Gothic towers the worthy Glaswegians *have* lately built: that of St. Peter's, in particular, being a most meritorious effort.

[2] There is a good abstract of the forms of the Italian campanile, by Mr. Papworth, in the Journal of the Archæological Institute, March 1850.

the plains of Italy and South France being that just shown you, the moment we enter the valleys of the Alps, where there is snow to be sustained, we find its form of roof altered by the substitution of a steep gable for a flat one.[1] There are probably few in the room who have not been in some

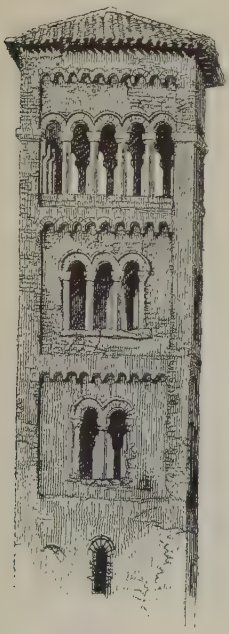

Fig. 9.

Fig. 10.

parts of South Switzerland, and who do not remember the beautiful effect of the grey mountain churches, many of them hardly changed since the tenth and eleventh centuries, whose pointed towers stand up through the green level of the vines, or crown the jutting rocks that border the valley. From this form to the true spire, the change is slight, and consists in little more than various decoration, generally

[1] The form establishes itself afterwards in the plains, in sympathy with other Gothic conditions, as in the campanile of St. Mark's at Venice.

in putting small pinnacles at the angles, and piercing the central pyramid with traceried windows, sometimes, as at Fribourg and Burgos, throwing it into tracery altogether: but to do this is invariably the sign of a vicious style, as it takes away from the spire its character of a true roof, and turns it nearly into an ornamental excrescence. At Antwerp and Brussels, the celebrated towers (one, observe, ecclesiastical, being the tower of the cathedral, and the other secular,) are formed by successions of diminishing towers, set one above the other, and each supported by buttresses thrown to the angles of the one beneath. At the English cathedrals of Lichfield and Salisbury, the spire is seen in great purity, only decorated by sculpture; but I am aware of no example so striking in its entire simplicity as that of the towers of the cathedral of Coutances in Normandy. There is a dispute between French and English antiquaries as to the date of the building, the English being unwilling to admit its complete priority to all their own Gothic. I have no doubt of this priority myself; and I hope that the time will soon come when men will cease to confound vanity with patriotism, and will think the honour of their nation more advanced by their own sincerity and courtesy, than by claims, however learnedly contested, to the invention of pinnacles and arches. I believe the French nation was, in the 12th and 13th centuries, the greatest in the world; and that the French not only invented Gothic architecture, but carried it to a perfection which no other nation has approached, then or since: but, however this may be, there can be no doubt that the towers of Coutances, if not the earliest, are among the very earliest, examples of the fully developed spire. I have drawn one of them carefully for you (*fig.* 11.), and you will see immediately that they are literally domestic roofs, with garret windows, executed on a large scale, and in stone. Their only ornament is a kind of scaly mail, which is nothing more than the copying in stone of the common wooden shingles of the house-roof; and their security is provided for by strong gabled dormer windows, of massy masonry, which, though supported on detached shafts, have weight enough completely to balance the lateral thrusts of the spires. Nothing can surpass the boldness or the simplicity of the plan; and yet, in spite of this simplicity, the clear detaching of the shafts from the slope of the spire, and

their great height, strengthened by rude cross-bars of stone, carried back to the wall behind, occasions so great a complexity and play of cast shadows, that I remember no architectural composition of which the aspect is so completely

FIG. 11.

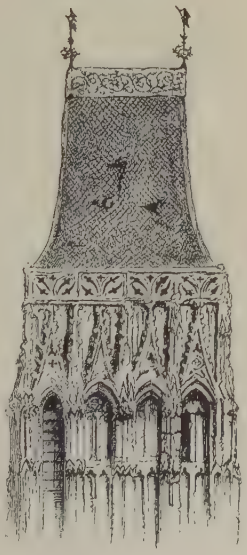

FIG. 12.

varied at different hours of the day.[1] But the main thing I wish you to observe is, the complete *domesticity* of the work; the evident treatment of the church spire merely as a magnified house-roof; and the proof herein of the great truth of

[1] The sketch was made about 10 o'clock on a September morning.

which I have been endeavouring to persuade you, that all good architecture rises out of good and simple domestic work; and that, therefore, before you attempt to build great churches and palaces, you must build good house doors and garret windows. Nor is the spire the only ecclesiastical form deducible from domestic architecture. The spires of France and Germany are associated with other towers, even simpler and more straightforward in confession of their nature, in which, though the walls of the tower are covered with sculpture, there is an ordinary ridged gable roof on the top. The finest example I know of this kind of tower, is that on the north-west angle of Rouen Cathedral (*fig.* 12.); but they occur in multitudes in the older towns of Germany; and the backgrounds of Albert Durer are full of them, and owe to them a great part of their interest: all these great and magnificent masses of architecture being repeated on a smaller scale by the little turret roofs and pinnacles of every house in the town; and the whole system of them being expressive, not by any means of religious feeling [1], but

[1] Among the various modes in which the architects, against whose practice my writings are directed, have endeavoured to oppose them, no charge has been made more frequently than that of their self-contradiction; the fact being, that there are few people in the world who are capable of seeing the two sides of any subject, or of conceiving how the statements of its opposite aspects can possibly be reconcilable. For instance, in a recent review, though for the most part both fair and intelligent, it is remarked, on this very subject of the domestic origin of the northern Gothic, that "Mr. Ruskin is evidently possessed by a fixed idea, that the Venetian architects were devout men, and that their devotion was expressed in their buildings; while he will not allow our own cathedrals to have been built by any but worldly men, who had no thoughts of heaven, but only vague ideas of keeping out of hell, by erecting costly places of worship." If this writer had compared the two passages with the care which such a subject necessarily demands, he would have found that I was not opposing Venetian to English piety; but that in the one case I was speaking of the spirit manifested in the entire architecture of the nation, and in the other of occasional efforts of superstition as distinguished from that spirit; and, farther, that in the one case, I was speaking of decorative features, which are ordinarily the results of feeling, in the other of structural features, which are ordinarily the results of necessity or convenience. Thus it is rational and just that we should attribute the decoration of the arches of St. Mark's with scriptural mosaics to a religious sentiment; but it would be a strange absurdity to regard as an effort of piety the invention of the form of the arch itself, of which one of the earliest and most perfect instances is in the Cloaca Maxima. And thus in the case of spires and towers, it is just to ascribe to the devotion of their designers that dignity which was

merely of joyfulness and exhilaration of spirit in the inhabitants of such cities, leading them to throw their roofs high into the sky, and therefore giving to the style of architecture with which these grotesque roofs are associated, a certain charm like that of cheerfulness in a human face; besides a power of interesting the beholder which is testified, not only by the artist in his constant search after such forms as the elements of his landscape, but by every phrase of our language and literature bearing on such topics. Have not these words, Pinnacle, Turret, Belfry, Spire, Tower, a pleasant sound in all your ears? I do not speak of your scenery, I do not ask you how much you feel that it owes to the grey battlements that frown through the woods of Craig Millar, to the pointed turrets that flank the front of Holyrood, or to the massy keeps of your Crichtoun, and Borthwick and other border towers. But look merely through your poetry and romances; take away out of your border ballads the word *tower* wherever it occurs, and the ideas connected with it, and what will become of the ballads? See how Sir Walter Scott cannot even get through a description of Highland scenery without help from the idea:—

> "Each purple peak, each flinty *spire*,
> Was bathed in floods of living fire."

Take away from Scott's romances the word and idea *turret*, and see how much you would lose. Suppose, for instance, when young Osbaldistone is leaving Osbaldistone Hall, instead of saying "The old clock struck two from a *turret* adjoining my bedchamber," he had said, "The old clock struck two from the landing at the top of the stair," what would become of the passage? And can you really suppose that what has so much power over you in words has no power over you in reality? Do you think there is any group of words which would thus interest you, when the things expressed by them are uninteresting? For instance, you know that, for an immense time back, all your public buildings have been built with a row of pillars supporting a

bestowed upon forms derived from the simplest domestic buildings; but it is ridiculous to attribute any great refinement of religious feeling, or height of religious aspiration, to those who furnished the funds for the erection of the loveliest tower in North France, by paying for permission to eat butter in Lent.

triangular thing called a pediment. You see this form every day in your banks and clubhouses, and churches and chapels; you are told that it is the perfection of architectural beauty; and yet suppose Sir Walter Scott, instead of writing, "Each purple peak, each flinty spire," had written, "Each purple peak, each flinty 'pediment.'"[1] Would you have thought the poem improved? And if not, why would it be spoiled? Simply because the idea is no longer of any value to you; the thing spoken of is a nonentity. These pediments, and stylobates, and architraves never excited a single pleasureable feeling in you—never will, to the end of time. They are evermore dead, lifeless, and useless, in art as in poetry, and though you built as many of them as there are slates on your house-roofs, you will never care for them. They will only remain to later ages as monuments of the patience and pliability with which the people of the 19th century sacrificed their feelings to fashions, and their intellects to forms. But on the other hand, that strange and thrilling interest with which such words strike you as are in any wise connected with Gothic architecture—as for instance, Vault, Arch, Spire, Pinnacle, Battlement, Barbican, Porch, and myriads of such others, words everlastingly poetical and powerful whenever they occur,—is a most true and certain index that the things themselves are delightful to you, and will ever continue to be so. Believe me, you do indeed love these things, so far as you care about art at all, so far as you are not ashamed to confess what you feel about them. In your public capacities, as bank directors, and charity overseers, and administrators of this and that other undertaking or institution, you cannot express your feelings at all. You form

[1] It has been objected to this comparison that the form of the pediment does not properly represent that of the rocks of the Trosachs. The objection is utterly futile, for there is not a single spire or pinnacle from one end of the Trosachs to the other. All their rocks are heavily rounded, and the introduction of the word "spire" is a piece of inaccuracy in description, ventured *merely for the sake of the Gothic image.* Farther: it has been said that if I had substituted the word "gable," it would have spoiled the line just as much as the word "pediment," though "gable" is a Gothic word. Of course it would; but why? Because "gable" is a term of vulgar domestic architecture, and therefore destructive of the tone of the heroic description; whereas "pediment" and "spire" are precisely correlative terms, being each the crowning feature in ecclesiastical edifices, and the comparison of their effects in the verse is therefore absolutely accurate, logical, and just.

committees to decide upon the style of the new building, and as you have never been in the habit of trusting to your own taste in such matters, you inquire who is the most celebrated, that is to say, the most employed, architect of the day. And you send for the great Mr. Blank, and the Great Blank sends you a plan of a great long marble box with half-a-dozen pillars at one end of it, and the same at the other; and you look at the Great Blank's great plan in a grave manner, and you daresay it will be very handsome; and you ask the Great Blank what sort of a blank cheque must be filled up before the great plan can be realised; and you subscribe in a generous "burst of confidence" whatever is wanted; and when it is all done, and the great white marble box is set up in your streets, you contemplate it, not knowing what to make of it exactly, but hoping it is all right; and then there is a dinner given to the Great Blank, and the morning Papers say that the new and handsome building, erected by the great Mr. Blank, is one of Mr. Blank's happiest efforts, and reflects the greatest credit upon the intelligent inhabitants of the city of so and so; and the building keeps the rain out as well as another, and you remain in a placid state of impoverished satisfaction therewith; but as for having any real pleasure out of it, you never hoped for such a thing. If you really make up a party of pleasure, and get rid of the forms and fashion of public propriety for an hour or two, where do you go for it? Where do you go to eat strawberries and cream? To Roslin Chapel, I believe; not to the portico of the last-built institution. What do you see your children doing, obeying their own natural and true instincts? What are your daughters drawing upon their card-board screens as soon as they can use a pencil? Not Parthenon fronts I think, but the ruins of Melrose Abbey, or Linlithgow Palace, or Lochleven Castle, their own pure Scotch hearts leading them straight to the right things, in spite of all that they are told to the contrary. You perhaps call this romantic, and youthful, and foolish. I am pressed for time now, and I cannot ask you to consider the meaning of the word "Romance." I will do that, if you please, in next lecture, for it is a word of greater weight and authority than we commonly believe. In the meantime, I will endeavour, lastly, to show you, not the romantic, but the plain

and practical conclusions which should follow from the facts I have laid before you.

I have endeavoured briefly to point out to you the propriety and naturalness of the two great Gothic forms, the pointed arch and gable roof. I wish now to tell you in what way they ought to be introduced into modern domestic architecture.

You will all admit that there is neither romance nor comfort in waiting at your own or at any one else's door on a windy and rainy day, till the servant comes from the end of the house to open it. You all know the critical nature of that opening—the drift of wind into the passage, the impossibility of putting down the umbrella at the proper moment without getting a cupful of water dropped down the back of your neck from the top of the doorway; and you know how little these inconveniences are abated by the common Greek portico at the top of the steps. You know how the east winds blow through those unlucky couples of pillars, which are all that your architects find consistent with due observance of the Doric order. Then, away with these absurdities; and the next house you build, insist upon having the pure old Gothic porch, walled in on both sides, with its pointed arch entrance and gable roof above. Under that, you can put down your umbrella at your leisure, and, if you will, stop a moment to talk with your friend as you give him the parting shake of the hand. And if now and then a wayfarer found a moment's rest on a stone seat on each side of it, I believe you would find the insides of your houses not one whit the less comfortable; and, if you answer me, that were such refuges built in the open streets, they would become mere nests of filthy vagrants, I reply that I do not despair of such a change in the administration of the poor laws of this country, as shall no longer leave any of our fellow-creatures in a state in which they would pollute the steps of our houses by resting upon them for a night. But if not, the command to all of us is strict and straight, "When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to *thy house*."[1] Not to the workhouse, observe, but to *thy* house: and I say it would be better a thousand-fold, that our doors should be beset by the poor day by day, than that it should be written of any

[1] Isai. lviii. 7.

one of us, "They reap every one his corn in the field, and they gather the vintage of the wicked. They cause the naked to lodge without shelter, that they have no covering in the cold. They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock, for want of a shelter." [1]

This, then, is the first use to which your pointed arches and gable roofs are to be put. The second is of more personal pleasureableness. You surely must all of you feel and admit the delightfulness of a bow window; I can hardly fancy a room can be perfect without one. Now you have nothing to do but to resolve that every one of your principal rooms shall have a bow window, either large or small. Sustain the projection of it on a bracket, crown it above with a little peaked roof, and give a massy piece of stone sculpture to the pointed arch in each of its casements, and you will have as inexhaustible a source of quaint richness in your street architecture, as of additional comfort and delight in the interiors of your rooms.

Thirdly; as respects windows which do not project. You will find that the proposal to build them with pointed arches is met by an objection on the part of your architects, that you cannot fit them with comfortable sashes. I beg leave to tell you that such an objection is utterly futile and ridiculous. I have lived for months in Gothic palaces, with pointed windows of the most complicated forms, fitted with modern sashes; and with the most perfect comfort. But granting that the objection were a true one—and I suppose it is true to just this extent, that it may cost some few shillings more per window in the first instance to set the fittings to a pointed arch than to a square one—there is not the smallest necessity for the *aperture* of the window being of the pointed shape. Make the uppermost or bearing arch pointed only, and make the top of the window square, filling the interval with a stone shield, and you may have a perfect school of architecture, not only consistent with, but eminently conducive to, every comfort of your daily life. The window in Oakham Castle (*fig.* 2.) is an example of such a form as actually employed in the 13th century; and I shall have to notice another in the course of next lecture. Meanwhile, I have but one word to say in conclusion. Whatever has been advanced in the course of this evening,

[1] Job, xxiv. 6–8.

has rested on the assumption that all architecture was to be of brick and stone; and may meet with some hesitation in its acceptance, on account of the probable use of iron, glass, and such other materials in our future edifices. I cannot now enter into any statement of the possible uses of iron or glass, but I will give you one reason, which I think will weigh strongly with most here, why it is not likely that they will ever become important elements in architectural effect. I know that I am speaking to a company of philosophers, but you are not philosophers of the kind who suppose that the Bible is a superannuated book; neither are you of those who think the Bible is dishonoured by being referred to for judgment in small matters. The very divinity of the Book seems to me, on the contrary, to justify us in referring *every* thing to it, with respect to which any conclusion can be gathered from its pages. Assuming then that the Bible is neither superannuated now, nor ever likely to be so, it will follow that the illustrations which the Bible employs are likely to be *clear and intelligible illustrations* to the end of time. I do not mean that everything spoken of in the Bible histories must continue to endure for all time, but that the things which the Bible uses for illustration of eternal truths are likely to remain eternally intelligible illustrations. Now, I find that iron architecture is indeed spoken of in the Bible. You know how it is said to Jeremiah, "Behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land." But I do not find that iron building is ever alluded to as likely to become *familiar* to the minds of men; but, on the contrary, that an architecture of carved stone is continually employed as a source of the most important illustrations. A simple instance must occur to all of you at once. The force of the image of the Corner Stone, as used throughout Scripture, would completely be lost, if the Christian and civilised world were ever extensively to employ any other material than earth and rock in their domestic buildings: I firmly believe that they never will; but that as the laws of beauty are more perfectly established, we shall be content still to build as our forefathers built, and still to receive the same great lessons which such building is calculated to convey; of which one is indeed never to be forgotten. Among the questions respecting towers which were laid before you

to-night, one has been omitted: "What man is there of you intending to build a tower, that sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" I have pressed upon you, this evening, the building of domestic towers. You may think it right to dismiss the subject at once from your thoughts; but let us not do so, without considering, each of us, how far *that* tower has been built, and how truly its cost has been counted.

LECTURE II

BEFORE proceeding to the principal subject of this evening, I wish to anticipate one or two objections which may arise in your minds to what I must lay before you. It may perhaps have been felt by you last evening, that some things I proposed to you were either romantic or Utopian. Let us think for a few moments what romance and Utopianism mean.

First, romance. In consequence of the many absurd fictions which long formed the elements of romance writing, the word romance is sometimes taken as synonymous with falsehood. Thus the French talk of *Des Romans*, and thus the English use the word Romancing.

But in this sense we had much better use the word falsehood at once. It is far plainer and clearer. And if in this sense I put anything romantic before you, pray pay no attention to it, or to me.

In the second place. Because young people are particularly apt to indulge in reverie, and imaginative pleasures, and to neglect their plain and practical duties, the word romantic has come to signify weak, foolish, speculative, unpractical, unprincipled. In all these cases it would be much better to say weak, foolish, unpractical, unprincipled. The words are clearer. If in this sense, also, I put anything romantic before you, pray pay no attention to me.

But in the third and last place. The real and proper use of the word romantic is simply to characterise an improbable or unaccustomed degree of beauty, sublimity, or virtue. For instance, in matters of history, is not the Retreat of the Ten Thousand romantic? Is not the death of Leonidas?

of the Horatii? On the other hand, you find nothing romantic, though much that is monstrous, in the excesses of Tiberius or Commodus. So again, the battle of Agincourt is romantic, and of Bannockburn, simply because there was an extraordinary display of human virtue in both those battles. But there is no romance in the battles of the last Italian campaign, in which mere feebleness and distrust were on one side, mere physical force on the other. And even in fiction, the opponents of virtue, in order to be romantic, must have sublimity mingled with their vice. It is not the knave, not the ruffian, that are romantic, but the giant and the dragon; and these, not because they are false, but because they are majestic. So again as to beauty. You feel that armour is romantic, because it is a beautiful dress, and you are not used to it. You do not feel there is anything romantic in the paint and shells of a Sandwich Islander, for these are not beautiful.

So, then, observe, this feeling which you are accustomed to despise—this secret and poetical enthusiasm in all your hearts, which, as practical men, you try to restrain—is indeed one of the holiest parts of your being. It is the instinctive delight in, and admiration for, sublimity, beauty, and virtue, unusually manifested. And so far from being a dangerous guide, it is the truest part of your being. It is even truer than your consciences. A man's conscience may be utterly perverted and led astray; but so long as the feelings of romance endure within us, they are unerring,—they are as true to what is right and lovely as the needle to the north; and all that you have to do is to add to the enthusiastic sentiment, the majestic judgment—to mingle prudence and foresight with imagination and admiration, and you have the perfect human soul. But the great evil of these days is that we try to destroy the romantic feeling, instead of bridling and directing it. Mark what Young says of the men of the world.

> "They, who think nought so strong of the romance,
> So rank knight-errant, as a real friend."

And they are right. True friendship is romantic, to the men of the world—true affection is romantic—true religion is romantic; and if you were to ask me who of all powerful and popular writers in the cause of error had wrought most

harm to their race, I should hesitate in reply whether to name Voltaire, or Byron, or the last most ingenious and most venomous of the degraded philosophers of Germany, or rather Cervantes, for he cast scorn upon the holiest principles of humanity—he, of all men, most helped forward the terrible change in the soldiers of Europe, from the spirit of Bayard to the spirit of Bonaparte,[1] helped to change loyalty into license, protection into plunder, truth into treachery, chivalry into selfishness; and, since his time, the purest impulses and the noblest purposes have perhaps been oftener stayed by the devil, under the name of Quixotism, than under any other base name or false allegation.

Quixotism, or Utopianism: that is another of the devil's pet words. I believe the quiet admission which we are all of us so ready to make, that, because things have long been wrong, it is impossible they should ever be right, is one of the most fatal sources of misery and crime from which this world suffers. Whenever you hear a man dissuading you from attempting to do well, on the ground that perfection is "Utopian," beware of that man. Cast the word out of your dictionary altogether. There is no need for it. Things are either possible or impossible—you can easily determine which, in any given state of human science. If the thing is impossible, you need not trouble yourselves about it; if possible, try for it. It is very Utopian to hope for the entire doing away with drunkenness and misery out of the Canongate; but the Utopianism is not our business—the *work* is. It is Utopian to hope to give every child in this kingdom the knowledge of God from its youth; but the Utopianism is not our business—the *work* is.

I have delayed you by the consideration of these two words, only in the fear that they might be inaccurately applied to the plans I am going to lay before you; for, though they were Utopian, and though they were romantic, they might be none the worse for that. But they are neither. Utopian they are not; for they are merely a proposal to do again what has been done for hundreds of years by people whose wealth and power were as nothing compared to ours;

[1] I mean no scandal against the *present* emperor of the French, whose truth has, I believe, been as conspicuous in the late political negociations, as his decision and prudence have been throughout the whole course of his government.

—and romantic they are not, in the sense of self-sacrificing or eminently virtuous, for they are merely the proposal to each of you that he should live in a handsomer house than he does at present, by substituting a cheap mode of ornamentation for a costly one. You perhaps fancied that architectural beauty was a very costly thing. Far from it. It is architectural ugliness that is costly. In the modern system of architecture, decoration is immoderately expensive, because it is both wrongly placed and wrongly finished. I say first, wrongly placed. Modern architects decorate the tops of their buildings. Mediæval ones decorated the bottom.[1] That makes all the difference between seeing the ornament and not seeing it. If you bought some pictures to decorate such a room as this, where would you put them? On a level with the eye, I suppose, or nearly so? Not on a level with the chandelier? If you were determined to put them up there, round the cornice, it would be better for you not to buy them at all. You would merely throw your money away. And the fact is, that your money *is* being thrown away continually, by wholesale; and while you are dissuaded, on the ground of expense, from building beautiful windows and beautiful doors, you are continually made to pay for ornaments at the tops of your houses, which, for all the use they are of, might as well be in the moon. For instance, there is not, on the whole, a more studied piece of domestic architecture in Edinburgh than the street in which so many of your excellent physicians live—Rutland Street. I do not know if you have observed its architecture; but if you will look at it to-morrow, you will see that a heavy and close balustrade is put all along the eaves of the houses. Your physicians are not, I suppose, in the habit of taking academic and meditative walks on the roofs of their houses; and, if not, this balustrade is altogether useless,—nor merely useless, for you will find it runs directly in front of all the garret windows, thus interfering with their light, and blocking out their view of the street. All that the parapet is meant to do, is to give some finish to the façades, and the inhabitants have thus been made to pay a large sum for a piece of mere decoration. Whether it *does* finish the façades satisfactorily, or whether the physicians resident in the street,

[1] For farther confirmation of this statement, see the Addenda at the end of this lecture.

or their patients, are in anywise edified by the succession of pear-shaped knobs of stone on their house-tops, I leave them to tell you, only do not fancy that the design, whatever its success, is an economical one.

But this is a very slight waste of money, compared to the constant habit of putting careful sculpture at the tops of houses. A temple of luxury has just been built in London, for the army and navy club. It cost 40,000*l.*, exclusive of purchase of ground. It has upon it an enormous quantity of sculpture, representing the gentlemen of the navy as little boys riding upon dolphins, and the gentlemen of the army—I couldn't see as what—nor can anybody; for all this sculpture is put up at the top of the house, where the gutter should be, under the cornice. I know that this was a Greek way of doing things. I can't help it: that does not make it a wise one. Greeks might be willing to pay for what they couldn't see, but Scotchmen and Englishmen shouldn't.

Not that the Greeks threw their work away as we do. As far as I know Greek buildings, their ornamentation, though often bad, is always bold enough and large enough to be visible in its place. It is not putting ornament *high* that is wrong; but it is cutting it too fine to be seen, wherever it is. This is the great modern mistake: you are actually at twice the cost which would produce an impressive ornament, to produce a contemptible one; you increase the price of your buildings by one-half, in order to mince their decoration into invisibility. Walk through your streets, and try to make out the ornaments on the upper parts of your fine buildings—(there are none at the bottoms of them.) Don't do it long, or you will all come home with inflamed eyes, but you will soon discover that you can see nothing but confusion in ornaments that have cost you ten or twelve shillings a foot.

Now the Gothic builders placed their decoration on a precisely contrary principle, and on the only rational principle. All their best and most delicate work they put on the foundation of the building, close to the spectator, and on the upper parts of the walls they put ornaments large, bold, and capable of being plainly seen at the necessary distance. A single example will enable you to understand this method of adaptation perfectly. The lower part of the

façade of the cathedral of Lyons, built either late in the 13th or early in the 14th century, is decorated with a series of niches, filled by statues of considerable size, which are supported upon pedestals within about eight feet of the ground. In general, pedestals of this kind are supported on some projecting portion of the basement; but at Lyons, owing to other arrangements of the architecture into which I have no time to enter, they are merely projecting tablets,

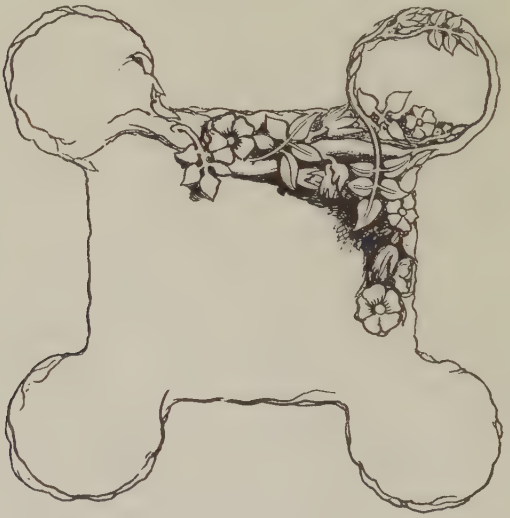

Fig. 13.

or flat-bottomed brackets of stone, projecting from the wall. Each bracket is about a foot and a half square, and is shaped thus (*fig.* 13.), showing to the spectator, as he walks beneath, the flat bottom of each bracket, quite in the shade, but within a couple of feet of the eye, and lighted by the reflected light from the pavement. The whole of the surface of the wall round the great entrance is covered with bas-relief, as a matter of course; but the architect appears to have been jealous of the smallest space which was well within the range of sight; and the *bottom* of every bracket is decorated also—nor that slightly, but decorated with no

fewer than *six figures each, besides a flower border*, in a space, as I said, *not quite a foot and a half square.* The shape of the field to be decorated being a kind of quatrefoil, as shown in *fig.* 13., four small figures are placed, one in each foil, and two larger ones in the centre. I had only time, in passing

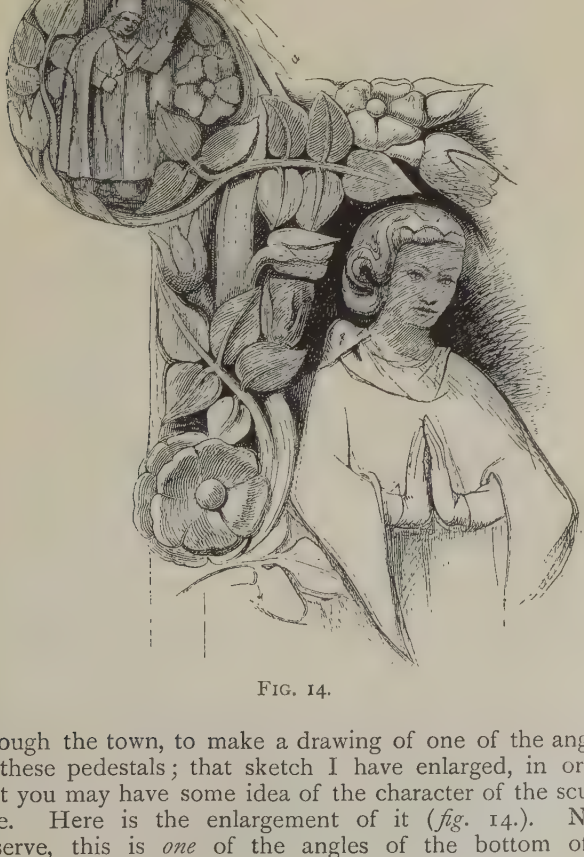

Fig. 14.

through the town, to make a drawing of one of the angles of these pedestals; that sketch I have enlarged, in order that you may have some idea of the character of the sculpture. Here is the enlargement of it (*fig.* 14.). Now observe, this is *one* of the angles of the bottom of a pedestal, not two feet broad, on the outside of a Gothic

building; it contains only one of the four little figures which form those angles; and it shows you the head only of one of the larger figures in the centre. Yet just observe how much design, how much wonderful composition, there is in this mere fragment of a building of the great times; a fragment, literally no larger than a school-boy could strike off in wantonness with a stick: and yet I cannot tell you how much care has been spent,—not so much on the execution, for it does not take much trouble to execute

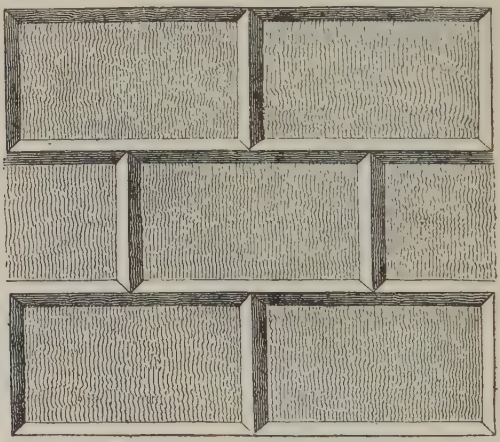

Fig. 15.

well on so small a scale—but on the design, of this minute fragment. You see it is composed of a branch of wild roses, which switches round at the angle, embracing the minute figure of the bishop, and terminates in a spray reaching nearly to the head of the large figure. You will observe how beautifully that figure is thus *pointed to* by the spray of rose, and how all the leaves around it in the same manner are subservient to the grace of its action. Look, if I hide one line, or one rosebud, how the whole is injured, and how much there is to study in the detail of it. Look at this little diamond crown, with a lock of the hair escaping from beneath it; and at the beautiful way in

which the tiny leaf at *a*, is set in the angle to prevent its harshness; and having examined this well, consider what a treasure of thought there is in a cathedral front, a hundred feet wide, every inch of which is wrought with sculpture like this! And every front of our thirteenth century cathedrals is inwrought with sculpture of this quality! And yet you quietly allow yourselves to be told that the men who thus wrought were barbarians, and that your architects are wiser and better in covering your walls with sculpture of this kind (*fig.* 15.).

Walk round your Edinburgh buildings, and look at the height of your eye, what you will get from them. Nothing but square-cut stone—square-cut stone—a wilderness of square-cut stone for ever and for ever; so that your houses look like prisons, and truly are so; for the worst feature of Greek architecture is, indeed, not its costliness, but its tyranny. These square stones are not prisons of the body, but graves of the soul; for the very men who could do sculpture like this of Lyons for you are here! still here, in your despised workmen: the race has not degenerated, it is you who have bound them down, and buried them beneath your Greek stones. There would be a resurrection of them, as of renewed souls, if you would only lift the weight of these weary walls from off their hearts.[1]

But I am leaving the point immediately in question, which, you will remember, was the proper adaptation of ornament to its distance from the eye. I have given you one example of Gothic ornament, meant to be seen close; now let me give you one of Gothic ornament intended to be seen far off. Here (*fig.* 16.) is a sketch of a niche at Amiens Cathedral, some fifty or sixty feet high on the façade, and seven or eight feet wide. Now observe, in the ornament close to the eye, you had *six figures* and a whole wreath of roses in the space of *a foot and a half* square; but in the ornament sixty feet from the eye, you have now only ten or twelve large *leaves* in a space of *eight feet square!* and note also that now there is no attempt whatsoever at the refinement of line and finish of edge which there was in the other example. The sculptor knew, that at the height of this niche, people would not attend to the

[1] This subject is farther pursued in the Addenda at the end of this Lecture.

delicate lines, and that the broad shadows would catch the eye instead. He has therefore left, as you see, rude square edges to his niche, and carved his leaves as massively and broadly as possible: and yet, observe how dexterously he

Fig. 16.

has given you a sense of delicacy and minuteness in the work, by mingling these small leaves among the large ones. I made this sketch from a photograph, and the spot in which these leaves occurred was obscure; I have, therefore, used those of the Oxalis acetosella, of which the quaint form is always interesting.

And you see by this example also what I meant just now by saying, that our own ornament was not only wrongly placed, but wrongly FINISHED. The very qualities which *fit* this leaf-decoration for due effect upon the eye, are those which would *conduce to economy* in its execution. A more expensive ornament would be less effective; and it is the very price we pay for finishing our decorations which spoils our architecture. And the curious thing is, that while you all appreciate, and that far too highly, what is called "the bold style" in painting, you cannot appreciate it in sculpture. You like a hurried, broad, dashing manner of execution in a watercolour drawing, though that may be seen as near as you choose, and yet you refuse to admit the nobleness of a bold, simple, and dashing stroke of the chisel in work which is to be seen forty fathoms off. Be assured that "handling" is as great a thing in marble as in paint, and that the power of producing a masterly effect with few touches is as essential in an architect as in a draughtsman, though indeed that power is never perfectly attained except by those who possess the power of giving the highest finish when there is occasion.

But there is yet another and a weightier charge to be brought against our modern Pseudo-Greek ornamentation. It is, first, wrongly placed; secondly, wrongly finished; and, thirdly, utterly *without meaning*. Observe in these two Gothic ornaments, and in every other ornament that ever was carved in the great Gothic times, there is a definite aim at the representation of some natural object. In *fig.* 14. you have an exquisite group of rose-stems, with the flowers and buds; in *fig.* 16., various wild weeds, especially the Geranium pratense; in every case you have an approximation to a natural form, and an unceasing variety of suggestion. But how much of nature have you in your Greek buildings? I will show you, taking for an example the best you have lately built; and, in doing so, I trust that nothing that I say will be thought to have any personal purpose, and that the architect of the building in question will forgive me; for it is just because it is a good example of the style that I think it more fair to use it for an example. If the building were a bad one of the kind, it would not be a fair instance; and I hope, therefore, that in speaking of the institution on the mound, just in progress, I shall be

understood as meaning rather a compliment to its architect than otherwise. It is not his fault that we force him to build in the Greek manner.

Now, according to the orthodox practice in modern architecture, the most delicate and minute pieces of sculpture on that building are at the very top of it, just under its gutter. You cannot see them in a dark day, and perhaps may never, to this hour, have noticed them at all. But there they are: sixty-six finished heads of lions, all exactly the same; and, therefore, I suppose, executed on some noble Greek type, too noble to allow any modest Modern to think of improving upon it. But whether executed on a Greek type or no, it is to be presumed that, as there are sixty-six of them alike, and on so important a building as that which is to contain your school of design, and which is the principal example of the Athenian style in modern Athens, there must be something especially admirable in them, and deserving your most attentive contemplation. In order, therefore, that you might have a fair opportunity of estimating their beauty, I was desirous of getting a sketch of a real lion's head to compare with them, and my friend Mr. Millais kindly offered to draw both the one and the other for me. You have not, however, at present, a lion in your zoological collection; and it being, as you are probably aware, the first principle of Pre-Raphaelitism, as well as essential to my object in the present instance, that no drawing should be made except from nature itself, I was obliged to be content with a tiger's head, which, however, will answer my purpose just as well, in enabling you to compare a piece of true, faithful, and natural work with modern architectural sculpture. Here, in the first place, is Mr. Millais' drawing from the *living* beast (*fig.* 17.). I have not the least fear but that you will at once acknowledge its truth and feel its power. Prepare yourselves next for the Grecian sublimity of the *ideal* beast, from the cornice of your schools of design. Behold it (*fig.* 18.).

Now we call ourselves civilised and refined in matters of art, but I assure you it is seldom that, in the very basest and coarsest grotesques of the inferior Gothic workmen, anything so contemptible as this head can be ever found. *They* only sink into such a failure accidentally, and in a single instance; and we, in our civilisation, repeat this noble piece of work threescore and six times over, as not being

Fig. 17.

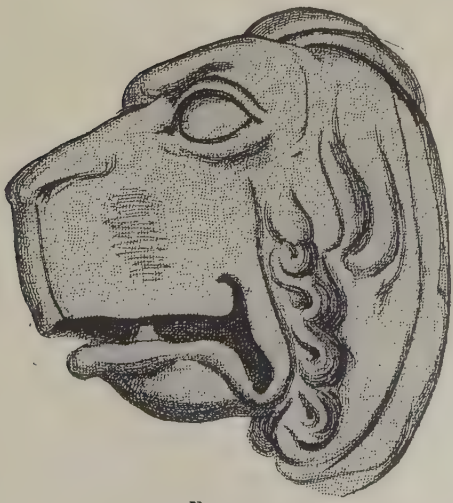

Fig. 18.

able to invent anything else so good! Do not think Mr. Millais has caricatured it. It is drawn with the strictest fidelity; photograph one of the heads to-morrow, and you will find the photograph tell you the same tale. Neither imagine that this is an unusual example of modern work. Your banks and public offices are covered with ideal lions' heads in every direction, and you will find them all just as bad as this. And, farther, note that the admission of such barbarous types of sculpture is not *merely* ridiculous; it is seriously harmful to your powers of perceiving truth or beauty of any kind or at any time. Imagine the effect on the minds of your children of having such representations of a lion's head as this thrust upon them perpetually; and consider what a different effect might be produced upon them if, instead of this barren and insipid absurdity, every boss on your buildings were, according to the workman's best ability, a faithful rendering of the form of some existing animal, so that all their walls were so many pages of natural history. And, finally, consider the difference, with respect to the mind of the workman himself, between being kept all his life carving, by sixties, and forties, and thirties, repetitions of one false and futile model,—and being sent, for every piece of work he had to execute, to make a stern and faithful study from some living creature of God.

And this last consideration enables me to press this subject on you on far higher grounds than I have done yet.

I have hitherto appealed only to your national pride, or to your common sense; but surely I should treat a Scottish audience with indignity if I appealed not finally to something higher than either of them,—to their religious principles.

You know how often it is difficult to be wisely charitable, to do good without multiplying the sources of evil. You know that to give alms is nothing unless you give thought also; and that therefore it is written, not "blessed is he that *feedeth* the poor," but, "blessed is he that *considereth* the poor." And you know that a little thought and a little kindness are often worth more than a great deal of money.

Now this charity of thought is not merely to be exercised towards the poor; it is to be exercised towards all men. There is assuredly no action of our social life, however unimportant, which, by kindly thought may not be made to

have a beneficial influence upon others; and it is impossible to spend the smallest sum of money, for any not absolutely necessary purpose, without a grave responsibility attaching to the manner of spending it. The object we ourselves covet may, indeed, be desirable and harmless, so far as we are concerned, but the providing us with it may, perhaps, be a very prejudicial occupation to some one else. And then it becomes instantly a moral question, whether we are to indulge ourselves or not. Whatever we wish to buy, we ought first to consider not only if the thing be fit for us, but if the manufacture of it be a wholesome and happy one; and if, on the whole, the sum we are going to spend will do as much good spent in this way as it would if spent in any other way. It may be said that we have not time to consider all this before we make a purchase. But no time could be spent in a more important duty; and God never imposes a duty without giving the time to do it. Let us, however, only acknowledge the principle;—once make up your mind to allow the consideration of the *effect* of your purchases to regulate the *kind* of your purchase, and you will soon easily find grounds enough to decide upon. The plea of ignorance will never take away our responsibilities. It is written, "If thou sayest, Behold we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it?"

I could press this on you at length, but I hasten to apply the principle to the subject of art. I will do so broadly at first, and then come to architecture. Enormous sums are spent annually by this country in what is called patronage of art, but in what is for the most part merely buying what strikes our fancies. True and judicious patronage there is indeed; many a work of art is bought by those who do not care for its possession, to assist the struggling artist, or relieve the unsuccessful one. But for the most part, I fear we are too much in the habit of buying simply what we like best, wholly irrespective of any good to be done, either to the artist or to the schools of the country. Now let us remember, that every farthing we spend on objects of art has influence over men's minds and spirits, far more than over their bodies. By the purchase of every print which hangs on your walls, of every cup out of which you drink, and every table off which you eat your bread, you are

educating a mass of men in one way or another. You are either employing them healthily or unwholesomely; you are making them lead happy or unhappy lives; you are leading them to look at nature, and to love her—to think, to feel, to enjoy,—or you are blinding them to nature, and keeping them bound, like beasts of burden, in mechanical and monotonous employments. We shall all be asked one day, why we did not think more of this.

Well but, you will say, how can we decide what we ought to buy, but by our likings? You would not have us buy what we don't like? No, but I would have you thoroughly sure that there *is* an absolute right and wrong in all art, and try to find out the right, and like that; and, secondly, sometimes to sacrifice a careless preference or fancy, to what you know is for the good of your fellow-creatures. For instance, when you spend a guinea upon an engraving, what have you done? You have paid a man for a certain number of hours to sit at a dirty table, in a dirty room, inhaling the fumes of nitric acid, stooping over a steel plate, on which, by the help of a magnifying glass, he is, one by one, laboriously cutting out certain notches and scratches, of which the effect is to be the copy of another man's work. You cannot suppose you have done a very charitable thing in this! On the other hand, whenever you buy a small watercolour drawing, you have employed a man happily and healthily, working in a clean room (if he likes), or more probably still, out in the pure country and fresh air, thinking about something, and learning something every moment; not straining his eyesight, nor breaking his back, but working in ease and happiness. Therefore if you *can* like a modest watercolour better than an elaborate engraving, do. There may indeed be engravings which are worth the suffering it costs to produce them; but at all events, engravings of public dinners and laying of foundation stones, and such things, might be dispensed with. The engraving ought to be a first-rate picture of a first-rate subject to be worth buying. Farther, I know that many conscientious persons are desirous of encouraging art, but feel at the same time that their judgment is not certain enough to secure their choice of the best kind of art. To such persons I would now especially address myself, fully admitting the greatness of their difficulty. It is not an easy

thing to acquire a knowledge of painting; and it is by no means a desirable thing to encourage bad painting. One bad painter makes another, and one bad painting will often spoil a great many healthy judgments. I could name popular painters now living, who have retarded the taste of their generation by twenty years. Unless, therefore, we are certain not merely that we like a painting, but that we are *right* in liking it, we should never buy it. For there is one way of spending money which is perfectly safe, and in which we may be absolutely sure of doing good. I mean, by paying for simple sculpture of natural objects, chiefly flowers and animals. You are aware that the possibilities of error in sculpture are much less than in painting; it is altogether an easier and simpler art, invariably attaining perfection long before painting, in the progress of a national mind. It may indeed be corrupted by false taste, or thrown into erroneous forms; but for the most part, the feebleness of a sculptor is shown in imperfection and rudeness, rather than in definite error. He does not reach the fineness of the forms of nature; but he approaches them truly up to a certain point, or, if not so, at all events an honest effort will continually improve him: so that if we set a simple natural form before him, and tell him to copy it, we are sure we have given him a wholesome and useful piece of education; but if we told him to paint it, he might, with all the honesty in the world, paint it wrongly and falsely, to the end of his days.

So much for the workman. But the workman is not the only person concerned. Observe farther, that when you buy a print, the enjoyment of it is confined to yourself and to your friends. But if you carve a piece of stone, and put it on the outside of your house, it will give pleasure to every person who passes along the street—to an innumerable multitude, instead of a few.

Nay but, you say, we ourselves shall not be benefited by the sculpture on the outsides of our houses. Yes, you will, and in an extraordinary degree; for, observe farther, that architecture differs from painting peculiarly in being an art of *accumulation*. The prints bought by your friends, and hung up in their houses, have no collateral effect with yours: they must be separately examined, and if ever they were hung side by side, they would rather injure than assist each other's effect. But the sculpture on your friend's house

unites in effect with that on your own. The two houses form one grand mass—far grander than either separately: much more if a third be added—and a fourth; much more if the whole street—if the whole city—join in the solemn harmony of sculpture. Your separate possessions of pictures and prints are to you as if you sang pieces of music with your single voices in your own houses. But your architecture would be as if you all sang together in one mighty choir. In the separate picture, it is rare that there exists any very high source of sublime emotion; but the great concerted music of the streets of the city, when turret rises over turret, and casement frowns beyond casement, and tower succeeds to tower along the farthest ridges of the inhabited hills,—this is a sublimity of which you can at present form no conception; and capable, I believe, of exciting almost the deepest emotion that art can ever strike from the bosoms of men.

And justly the deepest: for it is a law of God and of nature, that your pleasures—as your virtues—shall be enhanced by mutual aid. As, by joining hand in hand, you can sustain each other best, so, hand in hand, you can delight each other best. And there is indeed a charm and sacredness in street architecture which must be wanting even to that of the temple: it is a little thing for men to unite in the forms of a religious service, but it is much for them to unite, like true brethren, in the arts and offices of their daily lives.

And now, I can conceive only of one objection as likely still to arise in your minds, which I must briefly meet. Your pictures, and other smaller works of art, you can carry with you, wherever you live; your house must be left behind. Indeed, I believe that the wandering habits which have now become almost necessary to our existence, lie more at the root of our bad architecture than any other character of modern times. We always look upon our houses as mere temporary lodgings. We are always hoping to get larger and finer ones, or are forced, in some way or other, to live where we do not choose, and in continual expectation of changing our place of abode. In the present state of society, this is in a great measure unavoidable; but let us remember it is an *evil;* and that so far as it *is* avoidable, it becomes our duty to check the impulse. It is not for me

to lead you at present into any consideration of a matter so closely touching your private interests and feelings; but it surely is a subject for serious thought, whether it might not be better for many of us, if, on attaining a certain position in life, we determined, with God's permission, to choose a home in which to live and die,—a home not to be increased by adding stone to stone and field to field, but which, being enough for all our wishes at that period, we should resolve to be satisfied with for ever. Consider this; and also, whether we ought not to be more in the habit of seeking honour from our descendants than our ancestors; thinking it better to be nobly remembered than nobly born; and striving so to live, that our sons, and our sons' sons, for ages to come, might still lead their children reverently to the doors out of which we had been carried to the grave, saying: "Look: This was his house: This was his chamber."

I believe that you can bring forward no other serious objection to the principles for which I am pleading. They are so simple, and, it seems to me, so incontrovertible, that I trust you will not leave this room without determining, as you have opportunity, to do something to advance this long-neglected art of domestic architecture. The reasons I have laid before you would have weight, even were I to ask you to go to some considerable expenditure beyond what you at present are accustomed to devote to such purposes; but nothing more would be needed than the diversion of expenditures, at present scattered and unconsidered, into a single and effective channel. Nay, the mere interest of the money which we are accustomed to keep dormant by us in the form of plate and jewellery, would alone be enough to sustain a school of magnificent architecture. And although, in highly wrought plate, and in finely designed jewellery, noble art may occasionally exist, yet in general both jewels and services of silver are matters of ostentation, much more than sources of intellectual pleasure. There are also many evils connected with them—they are a care to their possessors, a temptation to the dishonest, and a trouble and bitterness to the poor. So that I cannot but think that part of the wealth which now lies buried in these doubtful luxuries, might most wisely and kindly be thrown into a form which would give perpetual pleasure, not to its possessor only, but

to thousands besides, and neither tempt the unprincipled, nor inflame the envious, nor mortify the poor; while, supposing that your own dignity was dear to you, this, you may rely upon it, would be more impressed upon others by the nobleness of your house-walls than by the glistening of your side-boards.

And even supposing that some additional expenditure *were* required for this purpose, are we indeed so much poorer than our ancestors, that we cannot now, in all the power of Britain, afford to do what was done by every small republic, by every independent city, in the middle ages, throughout France, Italy, and Germany? I am not aware of a vestige of domestic architecture, belonging to the great mediæval periods, which, according to its material and character, is not richly decorated. But look here (*fig.* 19), look to what an extent decoration *has* been carried in the domestic edifices of a city, I suppose not much superior in importance, commercially speaking, to Manchester, Liverpool, or Birmingham—namely, Rouen, in Normandy. This is a *garret* window, still existing there,—a garret window built by William de Bourgtheroude in the early part of the 16th century. I show it you, first, as a proof of what may be made of the features of domestic buildings we are apt to disdain; and secondly, as another example of a beautiful use of the pointed arch, filled by the solid shield of stone, and enclosing a square casement. It is indeed a peculiarly rich and beautiful instance, but it is a type of which many examples still exist in France, and of which many once existed in your own Scotland, of ruder work indeed, but admirable always in effect upon the outline of the building.[1]

I do not, however, hope that you will often be able to go as far as this in decoration; in fact I would rather recommend a simpler style to you, founded on earlier examples; but, if possible, aided by colour, introduced in various kinds of naturally coloured stones. I have observed that your Scottish lapidaries have admirable taste and skill in the

[1] One of the most beautiful instances I know of this kind of window is in the ancient house of the Maxwells, on the estate of Sir John Maxwell of Polloc. I had not seen it when I gave this lecture, or I should have preferred it, as an example, to that of Rouen, with reference to modern possibilities of imitation.

disposition of the pebbles of your brooches and other ornaments of dress; and I have not the least doubt that the genius of your country would, if directed to this particular style of architecture, produce works as beautiful as they would be thoroughly national. The Gothic of Florence, which owes at least the half of its beauty to the art of inlaying, would furnish you with exquisite examples; its sculpture is indeed the most perfect which was ever produced by the Gothic schools; but, besides this rich sculpture, all its flat surfaces are inlaid with coloured stones, much being done with a green serpentine, which forms the greater part of the coast of Genoa. You have, I believe, large beds of this rock in

Fig. 19.

Scotland, and other stones besides, peculiarly Scottish, calculated to form as noble a school of colour as ever existed.[1]

And, now, I have but two things more to say to you in conclusion.

Most of the lecturers whom you allow to address you, lay before you views of the sciences they profess, which are either generally received, or incontrovertible. I come before you at a disadvantage; for I cannot conscientiously tell you anything about architecture but what is at variance with all commonly received views upon the subject. I come before you, professedly to speak of things forgotten or things disputed; and I lay before you, not accepted principles, but questions at issue. Of those questions you are to be the judges, and to you I appeal. You must not, when you leave this room, if you feel doubtful of the truth of what I have said, refer yourselves to some architect of established reputation, and ask him whether I am right or not. You might as well, had you lived in the 16th century, have asked a Roman Catholic archbishop his opinion of the first reformer. I deny his jurisdiction; I refuse his decision. I call upon you to be Bereans in architecture, as you are in religion, and to search into these things for yourselves. Remember that, however candid a man may be, it is too much to expect of him, when his career in life has been successful, to turn suddenly on the highway, and to declare that all he has learned has been false, and all he has done, worthless; yet nothing less than such a declaration as this must be made by nearly every existing architect, before he admitted the truth of one word that I have said to you this evening. You must be prepared, therefore, to hear my opinions attacked with all the virulence of established interest, and all the pertinacity of confirmed prejudice; you will hear them made the subjects of every species of satire and invective; but one kind of opposition to them you will never hear; you will never hear them met by quiet, steady, rational argument; for that is the one way in which they *cannot* be met. You will constantly hear me accused—you

[1] A series of four examples of designs for windows was exhibited at this point of the lecture, but I have not engraved them, as they were hastily made for the purposes of momentary illustration, and are not such as I choose to publish or perpetuate.

yourselves may be the first to accuse me—of presumption in speaking thus confidently against the established authority of ages. Presumption! Yes, if I had spoken on my own authority; but I have appealed to two incontrovertible and irrefragable witnesses,—to the nature that is around you—to the reason that is within you. And if you are willing in this matter to take the voice of authority *against* that of nature and of reason, take it in other things also. Take it in religion, as you do in architecture. It is not by a Scottish audience,—not by the descendants of the Reformer and the Covenanter—that I expected to be met with a refusal to believe that the world might possibly have been wrong for *three* hundred years, in their ways of carving stones and setting up of pillars, when they know that they were wrong for *twelve* hundred years, in their marking how the roads divided, that led to Hell and Heaven.

You must expect at first that there will be difficulties and inconsistencies in carrying out the new style; but they will soon be conquered if you attempt not too much at once. Do not be afraid of incongruities,—do not think of unities of effect. Introduce your Gothic line by line and stone by stone; never mind mixing it with your present architecture; your existing houses will be none the worse for having little bits of better work fitted to them; build a porch, or point a window, if you can do nothing else; and remember that it is the glory of Gothic architecture that it can do *anything*. Whatever you really and seriously want, Gothic will do for you; but it must be an *earnest* want. It is its pride to accommodate itself to your needs; and the one general law under which it acts is simply this,—find out what will make you comfortable, build that in the strongest and boldest way, and then set your fancy free in the decoration of it. Don't do anything to imitate this cathedral or that, however beautiful. Do what is convenient; and if the form be a new one, so much the better; then set your mason's wits to work, to find out some new way of treating it. Only be steadily determined that, even if you cannot get the best Gothic, at least you will have no Greek; and in a few years' time,—in less time than you could learn a new science or a new language thoroughly,—the whole art of your native country will be reanimated.

And, now, lastly. When this shall be accomplished, do

not think it will make little difference to you, and that you will be little the happier, or little the better for it. You have at present no conception, and can have none, how much you would enjoy a truly beautiful architecture: but I can give you a proof of it which none of you will be able to deny. You will all assuredly admit this principle,—that whatever temporal things are spoken of in the Bible as emblems of the highest spiritual blessings, must be *good things* in themselves. You would allow that bread, for instance, would not have been used as an emblem of the word of life, unless it had been good, and necessary for man; nor water used as the emblem of sanctification, unless it also had been good and necessary for man. You will allow that oil, and honey, and balm are good, when David says, "Let the righteous reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil;" or, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste; yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth;" or, when Jeremiah cries out in his weeping, "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?" You would admit at once that the man who said there was no taste in the literal honey, and no healing in the literal balm, must be of distorted judgment, since God had used them as emblems of spiritual sweetness and healing. And how, then, will you evade the conclusion, that there must be joy, and comfort, and instruction in the literal beauty of architecture, when God, descending in his utmost love to the distressed Jerusalem, and addressing to her his most precious and solemn promises, speaks to her in such words as these: "Oh, thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted,"—What shall be done to her?—What brightest emblem of blessing will God set before her? "Behold, I will *lay thy stones with fair colours*, and thy foundations with sapphires; and I will make thy *windows of agates*, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones." Nor is this merely an emblem of spiritual blessing; for that blessing is added in the concluding words, "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."

ADDENDA TO LECTURES I AND II

The delivery of the foregoing lectures excited, as it may be imagined, considerable indignation among the architects who happened to hear them, and elicited various attempts at reply. As it seemed to have been expected by the writers of these replies, that in two lectures, each of them lasting not much more than an hour, I should have been able completely to discuss the philosophy and history of the architecture of the world, besides meeting every objection, and reconciling every apparent contradiction, which might suggest itself to the minds of hearers with whom, probably, from first to last, I had not a single exactly correspondent idea, relating to the matters under discussion, it seems unnecessary to notice any of them in particular. But as this volume may perhaps fall into the hands of readers who have not time to refer to the works in which my views have been expressed more at large, and as I shall now not be able to write or to say anything more about architecture for some time to come, it may be useful to state here, and explain in the shortest possible compass, the main gist of the propositions which I desire to maintain respecting that art; and also to note and answer, once for all, such arguments as are ordinarily used by the architects of the modern school to controvert these propositions. They may be reduced under six heads.

1. That Gothic or Romanesque construction is nobler than Greek construction.
2. That ornamentation is the principal part of architecture.
3. That ornamentation should be visible.
4. That ornamentation should be natural.
5. That ornamentation should be thoughtful.
6. And that therefore Gothic ornamentation is nobler than Greek ornamentation, and Gothic architecture the only architecture which should now be built.

Proposition 1st.—*Gothic or Romanesque construction is nobler than Greek construction.*[1] That is to say, building an

[1] The constructive value of Gothic architecture is, however, far greater than that of Romanesque, as the pointed arch is not only susceptible of an infinite variety of forms and applications to the weight to be sustained, but it possesses, in the outline given to its masonry at its perfect periods,

arch, vault, or dome, is a nobler and more ingenious work than laying a flat stone or beam over the space to be covered. It is, for instance, a nobler and more ingenious thing to build an arched bridge over a stream, than to lay two pine-trunks across from bank to bank; and, in like manner, it is a nobler and more ingenious thing to build an arch over a window, door, or room, than to lay a single flat stone over the same space.

No architects have ever attempted seriously to controvert this proposition. Sometimes, however, they say that "of two ways of doing a thing, the best and most perfect is not always to be adopted, for there may be particular reasons for employing an inferior one." This I am perfectly ready to grant, only let them show their reasons in each particular case. Sometimes also they say, that there is a charm in the simple construction which is lost in the scientific one. This I am also perfectly ready to grant. There is a charm in Stonehenge which there is not in Amiens Cathedral, and a charm in an Alpine pine bridge which there is not in the Ponte della Trinita at Florence, and, in general, a charm in savageness which there is not in science. But do not let it be said, therefore, that savageness *is* science.

Proposition 2nd.—*Ornamentation is the principal part of architecture.* That is to say, the highest nobility of a building does not consist in its being well built, but in its being nobly sculptured or painted.

This is always, and at the first hearing of it, very naturally, considered one of my most heretical propositions. It is also one of the most important I have to maintain; and it must be permitted me to explain it at some length. The first thing to be required of a building—not, observe, the *highest* thing, but the first thing—is that it shall answer its purposes completely, permanently, and at the smallest

the means of self-sustainment to a far greater degree than the round arch. I pointed out, for, I believe, the first time, the meaning and constructive value of the Gothic cusp, in page 120 of the first volume of the "Stones of Venice." That statement was first denied, and then taken advantage of, by modern architects; and, considering how often it has been alleged that I have no *practical* knowledge of architecture, it cannot but be matter of some triumph to me, to find the "Builder," of the 21st January, of this year, describing, as a new invention, the successful application to a church in Carlow of the principle which I laid down in the year 1851.

expense. If it is a house, it should be just of the size convenient for its owner, containing exactly the kind and number of rooms that he wants, with exactly the number of windows he wants, put in the places that he wants. If it is a church, it should be just large enough for its congregation, and of such shape and disposition as shall make them comfortable in it and let them hear well in it. If it be a public office, it should be so disposed as is most convenient for the clerks in their daily avocations; and so on; all this being utterly irrespective of external appearance or æsthetic considerations of any kind, and all being done solidly, securely, and at the smallest necessary cost.

The *sacrifice* of any of these first requirements to external appearance is a futility and absurdity. Rooms must not be darkened to make the ranges of windows symmetrical. Useless wings must not be added on one side, to balance useful wings on the other, but the house built with one wing, if the owner has no need of two; and so on.

But observe, in doing all this, there is no High, or as it is commonly called, Fine Art, required at all. There may be much science, together with the lower form of art, or "handicraft," but there is as yet no *Fine Art*. House-building, on these terms, is no higher thing than ship-building. It indeed will generally be found that the edifice designed with this masculine reference to utility, will have a charm about it, otherwise unattainable, just as a ship, constructed with simple reference to its service against powers of wind and wave, turns out one of the loveliest things that human hands produce. Still, we do not, and properly do not, hold ship-building to be a fine art, nor preserve in our memories the names of immortal ship-builders; neither, so long as the mere utility and constructive merit of the building are regarded, is architecture to be held a fine art, nor are the names of architects to be remembered immortally. For any one may at any time be taught to build the ship, or (thus far) the house, and there is nothing deserving of immortality in doing what any one may be taught to do.

But when the house, or church, or other building is thus far designed, and the forms of its dead walls and dead roofs are up to this point determined, comes the divine part of the work—namely, to turn these dead walls into living ones.

Only Deity, that is to say, those who are taught by Deity, can do that.

And that is to be done by painting and sculpture, that is to say, by ornamentation. Ornamentation is therefore the principal part of architecture, considered as a subject of fine art.

Now observe. It will at once follow from this principle, that *a great architect must be a great sculptor or painter.*

This is a universal law. No person who is not a great sculptor or painter *can* be an architect. If he is not a sculptor or painter, he can only be a *builder.*

The three greatest architects hitherto known in the world were Phidias, Giotto, and Michael Angelo; with all of whom, architecture was only their play, sculpture and painting their work. All great works of architecture in existence are either the work of single sculptors or painters, or of societies of sculptors and painters, acting collectively for a series of years. A Gothic cathedral is properly to be defined as a piece of the most magnificent associative sculpture, arranged on the noblest principles of building, for the service and delight of multitudes; and the proper definition of architecture, as distinguished from sculpture, is merely "the art of designing sculpture for a particular place, and placing it there on the best principles of building."

Hence it clearly follows, that in modern days we have no *architects.* The term "architecture" is not so much as understood by us. I am very sorry to be compelled to the discourtesy of stating this fact, but a fact it is, and a fact which it is necessary to state strongly.

Hence also it will follow, that the first thing necessary to the possession of a school of architecture is the formation of a school of able sculptors, and that till we have that, nothing we can do can be called architecture at all.

This, then, being my second proposition, the so-called "architects" of the day, as the reader will imagine, are not willing to admit it, or to admit any statement which at all involves it; and every statement, tending in this direction, which I have hitherto made, has of course been met by eager opposition; opposition which perhaps would have been still more energetic, but that architects have not, I think, till lately, been quite aware of the lengths to which I was prepared to carry the principle.

The arguments, or assertions, which they generally employ against this second proposition and its consequences, are the following.

First. That the true nobility of architecture consists, not in decoration (or sculpture), but in the "disposition of masses," and that architecture is, in fact, the "art of proportion."

It is difficult to overstate the enormity of the ignorance which this popular statement implies. For the fact is, that *all* art, and all nature, depend on the "disposition of masses." Painting, sculpture, music, and poetry, depend all equally on the "proportion," whether of colours, stones, notes, or words. Proportion is a principle, not of architecture, but of existence. It is by the laws of proportion that stars shine, that mountains stand, and rivers flow. Man can hardly perform any act of his life, can hardly utter two words of innocent speech, or move his hand in accordance with those words, without involving some reference, whether taught or instinctive, to the laws of proportion. And in the fine arts, it is impossible to move a single step, or to execute the smallest and simplest piece of work, without involving all those laws of proportion in their full complexity. To arrange (by invention) the folds of a piece of drapery, or dispose the locks of hair on the head of a statue, requires as much sense and knowledge of the laws of proportion, as to dispose the masses of a cathedral. The one are indeed smaller than the other, but the relations between 1, 2, 4, and 8, are precisely the same as the relations between 6, 12, 24, and 48. So that the assertion that "architecture is *par excellence* the art of proportion," could never be made except by persons who know nothing of art in general; and, in fact, never *is* made except by those architects, who, not being artists, fancy that the one poor æsthetic principle of which they *are* cognizant is the whole of art. They find that the "disposition of masses" is the only thing of importance in the art with which they are acquainted, and fancy therefore that it is peculiar to that art; whereas the fact is, that all great art *begins* exactly where theirs *ends*, with the "disposition of masses." The assertion that Greek architecture, as opposed to Gothic architecture, is the "architecture of proportion," is another of the results of the same broad ignorance. First, it is a calumny of the old Greek style itself, which, like every other good architecture

that ever existed, depends more on its grand figure sculpture, than on its proportions of parts; so that to copy the form of the Parthenon without its friezes and frontal statuary, is like copying the figure of a human being without its eyes and mouth; and, in the second place, so far as modern pseudo-Greek work *does* depend on its proportions more than Gothic work, it does so, not because it is better proportioned, but because it has nothing *but* proportion to depend upon. Gesture is in like manner of more importance to a pantomime actor than to a tragedian, not because his gesture is more refined, but because he has no tongue. And the proportions of our common Greek work are important to it undoubtedly, but not because they are or ever can be more subtle than Gothic proportion, but because that work has no sculpture, nor colour, nor imagination, nor sacredness, nor any other quality whatsoever in it, but ratios of measures. And it is difficult to express with sufficient force the absurdity of the supposition that there is more room for refinements of proportion in the relations of seven or eight equal pillars, with the triangular end of a roof above them, than between the shafts, and buttresses, and porches, and pinnacles, and vaultings, and towers, and all other doubly and trebly multiplied magnificences of membership which form the framework of a Gothic temple.

Second Reply.—It is often said, with some appearance of plausibility, that I dwell in all my writings on little things and contemptible details; and not on essential and large things. Now, in the first place, as soon as our architects become capable of doing and managing little and contemptible things, it will be time to talk about larger ones; at present I do not see that they can design so much as a niche or a bracket, and therefore they need not as yet think about anything larger. For although, as both just now, and always, I have said, there is as much science of arrangement needed in the designing of a small group of parts as of a large one, yet assuredly designing the larger one is *not the easier* work of the two. For the eye and mind can embrace the smaller object more completely, and if the powers of conception are feeble, they get embarrassed by the inferior members which fall *within* the divisions of the larger design.[1]

[1] Thus, in speaking of Pugin's designs, I said, "Expect no cathedrals of him; but no one, at present, can design a better finial, though he

So that, of course, the best way is to begin with the smaller features ; for most assuredly, those who cannot design small things cannot design large ones ; and yet, on the other hand, whoever can design small things *perfectly*, can design whatever he chooses. The man who, without copying, and by his own true and original power, can arrange a cluster of rose-leaves nobly, can design anything. He may fail from want of taste or feeling, but not from want of power.

And the real reason why architects are so eager in protesting against my close examination of details, is simply that they know they dare not meet me on that ground. Being, as I have said, in reality *not* architects, but builders, they can indeed raise a large building, with copied ornaments, which, being huge and white, they hope the public may pronounce "handsome." But they cannot design a cluster of oak-leaves—no, nor a single human figure—no, nor so much as a beast, or a bird, or a bird's nest ! Let them first learn to invent as much as will fill a quatrefoil, or point a pinnacle, and then it will be time enough to reason with them on the principles of the sublime.

But farther. The things that I have dwelt upon in examining buildings, though often their least parts, are always in reality their principal parts. That is the principal part of a building in which its mind is contained, and that, as I have just shown, is its sculpture and painting. I do with a building as I do with a man, watch the eye and the lips : when they are bright and eloquent, the form of the body is of little consequence.

Whatever other objections have been made to this second proposition, arise, as far as I remember, merely from a confusion of the idea of essentialness or primariness with the idea of nobleness. The essential thing in a building,—its *first* virtue,—is that it be strongly built, and fit for its uses. The noblest thing in a building, and its *highest* virtue, is that it be nobly sculptured or painted.[1]

One or two important corollaries yet remain to be stated.

will never design even a finial, perfectly." But even this I said less with reference to powers of arrangement, than to materials of fancy ; for many men have stone enough to last them through a boss or a bracket, but not to last them through a church front.

[1] Of course I use the term painting as including every mode of applying colour.

It has just been said that to sacrifice the convenience of a building to its external appearance is a futility and absurdity, and that convenience and stability are to be attained at the smallest cost. But when that convenience *has* been attained, the adding the noble characters of life by painting and sculpture, is a work in which all possible cost may be wisely admitted. There is great difficulty in fully explaining the various bearings of this proposition, so as to do away with the chances of its being erroneously understood and applied. For although, in the first designing of the building, nothing is to be admitted but what is wanted, and no useless wings are to be added to balance useful ones, yet in its ultimate designing, when its sculpture and colour become precious, it may be that actual room is wanted to display them, or richer symmetry wanted to deserve them ; and in such cases even a useless wall may be built to bear the sculpture, as at San Michele of Lucca, or a useless portion added to complete the cadences, as at St. Mark's of Venice, or useless height admitted in order to increase the impressiveness, as in nearly every noble building in the world. But the right to do this is dependent upon the actual *purpose* of the building becoming no longer one of utility merely ; as the purpose of a cathedral is not so much to shelter the congregation as to awe them. In such cases even some sacrifice of convenience may occasionally be admitted, as in the case of certain forms of pillared churches. But for the most part, the great law is, convenience first, and then the noblest decoration possible ; and this is peculiarly the case in domestic buildings, and such public ones as are constantly to be used for practical purposes.

Proposition 3rd.—*Ornamentation should be visible.*

The reader may imagine this to be an indisputable position ; but, practically, it is one of the last which modern architects are likely to admit ; for it involves much more than appears at first sight. To render ornamentation, with all its qualities, clearly and entirely visible in its appointed place on the building, requires a knowledge of effect and a power of design which few even of the best artists possess, and which modern architects, so far from possessing, do not so much as comprehend the existence of. But, without dwelling on this highest manner of rendering ornament "visible," I desire only at present to convince the reader

thoroughly of the main fact asserted in the text, that while modern builders decorate the *tops* of buildings, mediæval builders decorated the *bottom*. So singular is the ignorance yet prevailing of the first principles of Gothic architecture, that I saw this assertion marked with notes of interrogation in several of the reports of these Lectures; although, at Edinburgh, it was only necessary for those who doubted it to have walked to Holyrood Chapel, in order to convince themselves of the truth of it, so far as their own city was concerned; and although, most assuredly, the cathedrals of Europe have now been drawn often enough to establish the very simple fact that their best sculpture is in their porches, not in their steeples. However, as this great Gothic principle seems yet unacknowledged, let me state it here, once for all, namely, that the whole building is decorated, in all pure and fine examples, with the most exactly studied respect to the powers of the eye; the richest and most delicate sculpture being put on the walls of the porches, or on the façade of the building, just high enough above the ground to secure it from accidental (not from wanton[1]) injury. The decoration, as it rises, becomes *always* bolder, and in the buildings of the greatest times, *generally* simpler. Thus at San Zeno, and the duomo of Verona, the only delicate decorations are on the porches and lower walls of the façades, the rest of the buildings being left comparatively plain; in the ducal palace of Venice the only very careful work is in the lowest capitals; and so also the richness of the work diminishes upwards in the transepts of Rouen, and façades of Bayeux, Rheims, Amiens, Abbeville,[2] Lyons, and Nôtre Dame of Paris. But in the middle and later Gothic the tendency is to produce an equal richness *of effect* over the whole building, or even to increase the richness towards the top: but this is done so skilfully that no fine work is wasted; and when the spectator ascends to the higher points of the building, which he thought were of the

[1] Nothing is more notable in good Gothic than the confidence of its builders in the respect of the people for their work. A great school of architecture cannot exist when this respect cannot be calculated upon, as it would be vain to put fine sculpture within the reach of a population whose only pleasure would be in defacing it.

[2] The church at Abbeville is less flamboyant, but well deserves, for the exquisite beauty of its porches, to be named even with the great works of the thirteenth century.

most consummate delicacy, he finds them Herculean in strength and rough-hewn in style, the really delicate work being all put at the base. The general treatment of Romanesque work is to increase the *number* of arches at the top, which at once enriches and lightens the mass, and to put the finest *sculpture* of the arches at the bottom. In towers of all kinds and periods the *effective* enrichment is towards the top, and most rightly, since their dignity is in their height; but they are never made the recipients of fine sculpture, with, as far as I know, the single exception of Giotto's campanile, which indeed has fine sculpture, *but it is at the bottom.*

The façade of Wells Cathedral seems to be an exception to the general rule, in having its principal decoration at the top; but it is on a scale of perfect power and effectiveness; while in the base modern Gothic of Milan Cathedral the statues are cut delicately everywhere, and the builders think it a merit that the visitor must climb to the roof before he can see them; and our modern Greek and Italian architecture reaches the utmost pitch of absurdity by placing its fine work *at the top only.* So that the general condition of the thing may be stated boldly, as in the text: the principal ornaments of Gothic buildings being in their porches, and of modern buildings, in their parapets.

Proposition 4th.—*Ornamentation should be natural,*—that is to say, should in some degree express or adopt the beauty of natural objects. This law, together with its ultimate reason, is expressed in the statement given in the "Stones of Venice," vol. i. p. 195: "All noble ornament is the expression of man's delight in God's work."

Observe, it does not hence follow that it should be an exact imitation of, or endeavour in anywise to supersede, God's work. It may consist only in a partial adoption of, and compliance with, the usual forms of natural things, without at all going to the point of imitation; and it is possible that the point of imitation may be closely reached by ornaments, which nevertheless are entirely unfit for their place, and are the signs only of a degraded ambition and an ignorant dexterity. Bad decorators err as easily on the side of imitating nature, as of forgetting her; and the question of the exact degree in which imitation should be attempted under given circumstances, is one of the most subtle and

difficult in the whole range of criticism. I have elsewhere examined it at some length, and have yet much to say about it; but here I can only state briefly that the modes in which ornamentation *ought* to fall short of pure representation or imitation are in the main three, namely,—

A. Conventionalism by cause of colour.

B. Conventionalism by cause of inferiority.

C. Conventionalism by cause of means.

A. Conventionalism by cause of colour.—Abstract colour is not an imitation of nature, but *is* nature itself; that is to say, the pleasure taken in blue or red, as such, considered as hues merely, is the same, so long as the brilliancy of the hue is equal, whether it be produced by the chemistry of man, or the chemistry of flowers, or the chemistry of skies. We deal with colour as with sound—so far ruling the power of the light, as we rule the power of the air, producing beauty not necessarily imitative, but sufficient in itself, so that, wherever colour is introduced, ornamentation may cease to represent natural objects, and may consist in mere spots, or bands, or flamings, or any other condition of arrangement favourable to the colour.

B. Conventionalism by cause of inferiority.—In general, ornamentation is set upon certain services, subjected to certain systems, and confined within certain limits; so that its forms require to be lowered or limited in accordance with the required relations. It cannot be allowed to assume the free outlines, or to rise to the perfection of imitation. Whole banks of flowers, for instance, cannot be carved on cathedral fronts, but only narrow mouldings, having some of the characters of banks of flowers. Also, some ornaments require to be subdued in value, that they may not interfere with the effect of others; and all these necessary *inferiorities* are attained by means of departing from natural forms—it being an established law of human admiration that what is most representative of nature shall, *cæteris paribus*, be most attractive.

All the various kinds of ornamentation, consisting of spots, points, twisted bands, abstract curves, and other such, owe their peculiar character to this conventionalism "by cause of inferiority."

C. Conventionalism by cause of means.—In every branch of art, only so much imitation of nature is to be admitted as

is consistent with the ease of the workman and the capacities of the material. Whatever shortcomings are appointed (for they are more than permitted, they are in such cases appointed, and meritorious) on account of the untractableness of the material, come under the head of "conventionalism by cause of means."

These conventionalities, then, being duly understood and accepted, in modification of the general law, that law will be, that the glory of all ornamentation consists in the adoption or imitation of the beauties of natural objects, and that no work can be of high value which is not full of this beauty. To this fourth proposition, modern architects have not ventured to make any serious resistance. On the contrary, they seem to be, little by little, gliding into an obscure perception of the fact, that architecture, in most periods of the world, had sculpture upon it, and that the said sculpture generally did represent something intelligible. For instance, we find Mr. Huggins, of Liverpool, lately lecturing upon architecture "in its relations to nature and the intellect,"[1] and gravely informing his hearers, that "in the middle ages, angels were human figures;" that "some of the richest ornaments of Solomon's temple were imitated from the palm and pomegranate," and that "the Greeks followed the example of the Egyptians in selecting their ornaments from the *plants* of their own country." It is to be presumed that the lecturer has never been in the Elgin or Egyptian room of the British Museum, or it might have occurred to him that the Egyptians and Greeks sometimes also selected their ornaments from the *men* of their own country. But we must not expect too much illumination at once; and as we are told that, in conclusion, Mr. Huggins glanced at "the error of architects in neglecting the fountain of wisdom thus open to them in nature," we may expect in due time large results from the discovery of a source of wisdom so unimagined.

Proposition 5th.—*Ornamentation should be thoughtful.* That is to say, whenever you put a chisel or a pencil into a man's hand for the purpose of enabling him to produce beauty, you are to expect of him that he will think about what he is doing, and feel something about it, and that the expression of this thought or feeling will be the most noble quality in what he produces with his chisel or brush, inasmuch

[1] See "The Builder," for January 12, 1854.

as the power of thinking and feeling is the most noble thing in the man. It will hence follow that as men do not commonly think the same thoughts twice, you are not to require of them that they shall do the same thing twice. You are to expect another and a different thought of them, as soon as one thought has been well expressed.

Hence, therefore, it follows also that all noble ornamentation is perpetually varied ornamentation, and that the moment you find ornamentation unchanging, you may know that it is of a degraded kind or degraded school. To this law, the only exceptions arise out of the uses of monotony, as a contrast to change. Many subordinate architectural mouldings are severely alike in their various parts (though never unless they are thoroughly subordinate, for monotony is always deathful according to the degree of it), in order to set off change in others; and a certain monotony or similarity must be introduced among the most changeful ornaments in order to enhance and exhibit their own changes.

The truth of this proposition is self-evident; for no art can be noble which is incapable of expressing thought, and no art is capable of expressing thought which does not change. To require of an artist that he should always reproduce the same picture, would be not one whit more base than to require of a carver that he should always reproduce the same sculpture.

The principle is perfectly clear and altogether incontrovertible. Apply it to modern Greek architecture, and that architecture must cease to exist; for it depends absolutely on copyism.

The sixth proposition above stated, that *Gothic ornamentation is nobler than Greek ornamentation*, &c., is therefore sufficiently proved by the acceptance of this one principle, no less important than unassailable. Of all that I have to bring forward respecting architecture, this is the one I have most at heart; for on the acceptance of this depends the determination whether the workman shall be a living, progressive, and happy human being, or whether he shall be a mere machine, with its valves smoothed by heart's blood instead of oil,—the most pitiable form of slave.

And it is with especial reference to the denial of this principle in modern and renaissance architecture, that I

speak of that architecture with a bitterness which appears to many readers extreme, while in reality, so far from exaggerating, I have not grasp enough of thought to embrace, the evils which have resulted among all the orders of European society from the introduction of the renaissance schools of building, in turning away the eyes of the beholder from natural beauty, and reducing the workman to the level of a machine. In the Gothic times, writing, painting, carving, casting,—it mattered not what,—were all works done by thoughtful and happy men; and the illumination of the volume, and the carving and casting of wall and gate, employed, not thousands, but millions, of true and noble *artists* over all Christian lands. Men in the same position are now left utterly without intellectual power or pursuit, and, being unhappy in their work, they rebel against it: hence one of the worst forms of Unchristian Socialism. So again, there being now no nature or variety in architecture, the multitude are not interested in it; therefore, for the present, they have lost their taste for art altogether, so that you can no longer trust sculpture within their reach. Consider the innumerable forms of evil involved in the temper and taste of the existing populace of London or Paris, as compared with the temper of the populace of Florence, when the quarter of Santa Maria Novella received its title of "Joyful Quarter," from the rejoicings of the multitude at getting a new picture into their church, better than the old ones;—all this difference being exclusively chargeable on the Renaissance architecture. And then, farther, if we remember, not only the revolutionary ravage of sacred architecture, but the immeasurably greater destruction effected by the Renaissance builders and their satellites, wherever they came, destruction so wide-spread that there is not a town in France or Italy but it has to deplore the deliberate overthrow of more than half its noblest monuments, in order to put up Greek porticoes or palaces in their stead; adding also all the blame of the ignorance of the meaner kind of men, operating in thousands of miserable abuses upon the frescoes, books, and pictures, as the architects' hammers did on the carved work, of the Middle Ages[1]; and, finally, if we examine the

[1] Nothing appears to me much more wonderful, than the remorseless way in which the educated ignorance, even of the present day, will sweep away an ancient monument, if its preservation be not absolutely

influence which the luxury, and, still more, the heathenism, joined with the essential dulness of these schools, have had on the upper classes of society, it will ultimately be found that no expressions are energetic enough to describe, nor broad enough to embrace, the enormous moral evils which have risen from them.

I omitted, in preparing the preceding lecture for the press, a passage referring to this subject, because it appeared to me, in its place, hardly explained by preceding statements. But I give it here unaltered, as being, in sober earnest, but too weak to characterise the tendencies of the "accursed" architecture of which it speaks.

"Accursed, I call it, with deliberate purpose. It needed but the gathering up of a Babylonish garment to trouble Israel;—these marble garments of the ancient idols of the Gentiles, how many have *they* troubled! Gathered out of their ruins by the second Babylon,—gathered by the Papal Church in the extremity of her sin;—raised up by her, not when she was sending forth her champions to preach in the highway, and pine in the desert, and perish in the fire, but in the very scarlet fruitage and fulness of her guilt, when her priests vested themselves not with purple only, but with blood, and bade the cups of their feasting foam not with wine only, but with hemlock;—raised by the hands of the Leos and the Borgias, raised first into that mighty temple where the seven hills slope to the Tiber, that marks by its massy dome the central spot, where Rome has reversed the words of Christ, and, as He vivified the stone to the apostleship, she petrifies the apostleship into the stumbling stone;—exalted there first as if to mark what work it had to do, it went forth to paralyse or to pollute, and wherever it came, the lustre faded from the streets of our cities, the grey

consistent with immediate convenience or economy. Putting aside all antiquarian considerations, and all artistical ones, I wish that people would only consider the steps, and the weight of the following very simple argument. You allow it is wrong to waste time, that is, your own time; but then it must be still more wrong to waste other people's; for you have some right to your own time, but none to theirs. Well, then, if it is thus wrong to waste the time of the living, it must be still more wrong to waste the time of the dead; for the living can redeem their time, the dead cannot. But you waste the best of the time of the dead when you destroy the works they have left you; for to those works they gave the best of their time, intending them for immortality.

towers and glorious arches of our abbeys fell by the river sides, the love of nature was uprooted from the hearts of men, base luxuries and cruel formalisms were festered and frozen into them from their youth; and at last, where, from his fair Gothic chapel beside the Seine, the king St. Louis had gone forth, followed by his thousands in the cause of Christ, another king was dragged forth from the gates of his Renaissance palace,[1] to die, by the hands of the thousands of his people gathered in another crusade; or what shall that be called—whose sign was not the cross, but the guillotine?"

'I have not space here to pursue the subject farther, nor shall I be able to write anything more respecting architecture for some time to come. But in the meanwhile, I would most earnestly desire to leave with the reader this one subject of thought—"*The Life of the Workman.*" For it is singular, and far more than singular, that among all the writers who have attempted to examine the principles stated in the "Stones of Venice," not one[2] has as yet made a single comment on what was precisely and accurately the most important chapter in the whole book; namely, the description of the nature of Gothic architecture, as involving the liberty of the workman (vol. ii. ch. vi.). I had hoped that whatever might be the prejudices of modern architects, there would have been found some among them quicksighted enough to see the bearings of this principle, and generous enough to support it. There has hitherto stood forward not *one.*

[1] The character of Renaissance architecture, and the spirit which dictated its adoption, may be remembered as having been centred and symbolised in the palace of Versailles; whose site was chosen by Louis the Fourteenth, in order that from thence he might *not* see St. Denis, the burial place of his family. The cost of the palace in 27 years is stated in the "Builder" for March 18th of this year, to have been 3,246,000*l.* money of that period, equal to about seven millions now (900,000*l.* having been expended in the year 1686 alone). The building is thus notably illustrative of the two feelings which were stated in the "Stones of Venice," to be peculiarly characteristic of the Renaissance spirit, the Pride of State and Fear of Death. Compare the horror of Louis the Fourteenth at the sight of the tower of St. Denis, with the feeling which prompted the Scaligeri at Verona to set their tombs within fifteen feet of their palace walls.

[2] An article in Fraser's Magazine, which has appeared since these sheets were sent to press, forms a solitary exception.

But my purpose must at last be accomplished for all this. The labourer among the gravestones of our modern architecture must yet be raised up, and become a living soul. Before he can be thus raised, the whole system of Greek architecture, as practised in the present day, must be annihilated; but it *will* be annihilated, and that speedily. For truth and judgment are its declared opposites, and against these nothing ever finally prevailed, or shall prevail.

LECTURE III

TURNER, AND HIS WORKS

My object this evening is not so much to give you any account of the works or the genius of the great painter whom we have so lately lost (which it would require rather a year than an hour to do), as to give you some idea of the position which his works hold with respect to the landscape of other periods, and of the general condition and prospects of the landscape art of the present day. I will not lose time in prefatory remarks, as I have little enough at any rate, but will enter abruptly on my subject.

You are all of you well aware that landscape seems hardly to have exercised any strong influence, as such, on any pagan nation, or pagan artist. I have no time to enter into any details on this, of course, most intricate and difficult subject; but I will only ask you to observe, that wherever natural scenery is alluded to by the ancients, it is either agriculturally, with the kind of feeling that a good Scotch farmer has; sensually, in the enjoyment of sun or shade, cool winds or sweet scents; fearfully, in a mere vulgar dread of rocks and desolate places, as compared with the comfort of cities; or, finally, superstitiously, in the personification or deification of natural powers, generally with much degradation of their impressiveness, as in the paltry fables of Ulysses receiving the winds in bags from Æolus, and of the Cyclops hammering lightning sharp at the ends, on an anvil.[1] Of course

[1] Of course I do not mean by calling these fables "paltry," to dispute their neatness, ingenuity, or moral depth; but only their want of apprehension of the extent and awfulness of the phenomena introduced. So also, in denying Homer's interest in nature, I do not mean

you will here and there find feeble evidences of a higher sensibility, chiefly, I think, in Plato, Æschylus, Aristophanes, and Virgil. Homer, though in the epithets he applies to landscape always thoroughly graphic, uses the same epithet for rocks, seas, and trees, from one end of his poem to the other, evidently without the smallest interest in anything of the kind; and in the mass of heathen writers, the absence of sensation on these subjects is singularly painful. For instance, in that, to my mind, most disgusting of all so-called poems, the journey to Brundusium, you remember that Horace takes exactly as much interest in the scenery he is passing through, as Sancho Panza would have done.

You will find, on the other hand, that the language of the Bible is specifically distinguished from all other early literature, by its delight in natural imagery; and that the dealings of God with his people are calculated peculiarly to awaken this sensibility within them. Out of the monotonous valley of Egypt they are instantly taken into the midst of the mightiest mountain scenery in the peninsula of Arabia; and that scenery is associated in their minds with the immediate manifestation and presence of the Divine Power; so that mountains for ever afterwards become invested with a peculiar sacredness in their minds; while their descendants being placed in what was then one of the loveliest districts upon the earth, full of glorious vegetation, bounded on one side by the sea, on the north by "that goodly mountain" Lebanon, on the south and east by deserts, whose barrenness enhanced by their contrast the sense of the perfection of beauty in their own land, they became, by these means, and by the touch of God's own hand upon their hearts, sensible to the appeal of natural scenery in a way in which no other people were at the time; and their literature is full of expressions, not only testifying a vivid sense of the power of nature over man, but showing that *sympathy with natural things themselves*, as if they had human souls, which is the especial characteristic of true love of the works of God. I intended to have insisted on this sympathy at greater length, but I found,

to deny his accuracy of observation, or his power of seizing on the main points of landscape, but I deny the power of landscape over his heart, unless when closely associated with, and altogether subordinate to, some human interest.

only two or three days ago, much of what I had to say to you anticipated in a little book, unpretending, but full of interest, "The Lamp and the Lantern," by Dr. James Hamilton; and I will therefore only ask you to consider such expressions as that tender and glorious verse in Isaiah, speaking of the cedars on the mountains as rejoicing over the fall of the king of Assyria: "Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since *thou* art gone down to the grave, no feller is come up against us." See what sympathy there is here, as if with the very hearts of the trees themselves. So also in the words of Christ, in his personification of the lilies: "They toil not, neither do they spin." Consider such expressions as, "The sea saw that, and fled. Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams; and the little hills like lambs." Try to find anything in profane writing like this; and note farther that the whole book of Job appears to have been chiefly written and placed in the inspired volume in order to show the value of natural history, and its power on the human heart. I cannot pass by it without pointing out the evidences of the beauty of the country that Job inhabited.[1] Observe, first, it was an arable country. "The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them." It was a pastoral country: his substance, besides camels and asses, was 7000 sheep. It was a mountain country, fed by streams descending from the high snows. "My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away; which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid: What time they wax warm they vanish: when it is hot they are consumed out of their place." Again: "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean." Again: "Drought and heat consume the snow waters." It was a rocky country, with forests and verdure rooted in the rocks. "His branch shooteth forth in his garden; his roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones." Again: "Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field." It was a place visited, like the valleys of Switzerland, by convulsions and falls of mountains. "Surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place." "The waters wear the stones: thou

[1] This passage, respecting the book of Job, was omitted in the delivery of the Lecture, for want of time.

washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth." "He removeth the mountains and they know not: he overturneth them in his anger." "He putteth forth his hand upon the rock: he overturneth the mountains by the roots: he cutteth out rivers among the rocks." I have not time to go farther into this; but you see Job's country was one like your own, full of pleasant brooks and rivers, rushing among the rocks, and of all other sweet and noble elements of landscape. The magnificent allusions to natural scenery throughout the book are therefore calculated to touch the heart to the end of time.

Then at the central point of Jewish prosperity, you have the first great naturalist the world ever saw, Solomon; not permitted, indeed, to anticipate, in writing, the discoveries of modern times, but so gifted as to show us that heavenly wisdom is manifested as much in the knowledge of the hyssop that springeth out of the wall as in political and philosophical speculation.

The books of the Old Testament, as distinguished from all other early writings, are thus prepared for an everlasting influence over humanity; and, finally, Christ himself, setting the concluding example to the conduct and thoughts of men, spends nearly his whole life in the fields, the mountains, or the small country villages of Judea; and in the very closing scenes of his life, will not so much as sleep within the walls of Jerusalem, but rests at the little village of Bethphage, walking in the morning, and returning in the evening, through the peaceful avenues of the mount of Olives, to and from his work of teaching in the temple.

It would thus naturally follow, both from the general tone and teaching of the Scriptures, and from the example of our Lord himself, that wherever Christianity was preached and accepted, there would be an immediate interest awakened in the works of God, as seen in the natural world; and, accordingly, this is the second universal and distinctive character of Christian art, as distinguished from all pagan work, the first being a peculiar spirituality in its conception of the human form, preferring holiness of expression and strength of character, to beauty of features or of body, and the second, as I say, its intense fondness for natural objects —animals, leaves and flowers,—inducing an immediate transformation of the cold and lifeless pagan ornamentation

into vivid imagery of nature. Of course this manifestation of feeling was at first checked by the circumstances under which the Christian religion was disseminated. The art of the first three centuries is entirely subordinate,—restrained partly by persecution, partly by a high spirituality, which cared much more about preaching than painting; and then when, under Constantine, Christianity became the religion of the Roman empire, myriads of persons gave the aid of their wealth and of their art to the new religion, who were Christians in nothing but the name, and who decorated a Christian temple just as they would have decorated a pagan one, merely because the new religion had become Imperial. Then, just as the new art was beginning to assume a distinctive form, down came the northern barbarians upon it; and all their superstitions had to be leavened with it, and all their hard hands and hearts softened by it, before their art could appear in anything like a characteristic form. The warfare in which Europe was perpetually plunged retarded this development for ages; but it steadily and gradually prevailed, working from the 8th to the 11th century like a seed in the ground, showing little signs of life, but still, if carefully examined, changing essentially every day and every hour: at last, in the 12th century, the blade appears above the black earth; in the 13th, the plant is in full leaf.

I begin, then, with the 13th century, and must now make to you a general assertion, which, if you will note down and examine at your leisure, you will find true and useful, though I have not time at present to give you full demonstration of it.

I say, then, that the art of the 13th century is the foundation of all art,—not merely the foundation, but the root of it; that is to say, succeeding art is not merely built upon it, but was all comprehended in it, and is developed out of it. Passing this great century, we find three successive branches developed from it, in each of the three following centuries. The 14th century is pre-eminently the age of *Thought*, the 15th the age of *Drawing*, and the 16th the age of *Painting*.

Observe, first, the 14th century is pre-eminently the age of thought. It begins with the first words of the poem of Dante; and all the great pictorial poems—the mighty series of works in which everything is done to relate, but nothing to imitate—belong to this century. I should only confuse

you by giving you the names of marvellous artists, most of them little familiar to British ears, who adorned this century in Italy; but you will easily remember it as the age of Dante and Giotto,—the age of *Thought*.

The men of the succeeding century (the 15th) felt that they could not rival their predecessors in invention, but might excel them in execution. Original thoughts belonging to this century are comparatively rare; even Raphael and Michael Angelo themselves borrowed all their principal ideas and plans of pictures from their predecessors; but they executed them with a precision up to that time unseen. You must understand by the word "drawing," the perfect rendering of forms, whether in sculpture or painting; and then remember the 15th century as the age of Leonardo, Michael Angelo, Lorenzo Ghiberti, and Raphael,—pre-eminently the age of *Drawing*.

The 16th century produced the four greatest *Painters*, that is to say, managers of colour, whom the world has seen; namely, Tintoret, Paul Veronese, Titian, and Correggio. I need not say more to justify my calling it the age of *Painting*.

This, then, being the state of things respecting art in general, let us next trace the career of landscape through these centuries.

It was only towards the close of the 13th century that figure painting began to assume so perfect a condition as to require some elaborate suggestion of landscape background. Up to that time, if any natural object had to be represented, it was done in an entirely conventional way, as you see it upon Greek vases, or in a Chinese porcelain pattern; an independent tree or flower being set upon the white ground, or ground of any colour, wherever there was a vacant space for it, without the smallest attempt to imitate the real colours and relations of the earth and sky about it. But at the close of the 13th century, Giotto, and in the course of the 14th, Orcagna, sought, for the first time, to give some resemblance to nature in their backgrounds, and introduced behind their figures pieces of true landscape, formal enough still, but complete in intention, having foregrounds and distances, sky and water, forests and mountains, carefully delineated, not exactly in their true colour, but yet in colour approximating to the truth. The system which

they introduced (for though in many points enriched above the work of earlier ages, the Orcagna and Giotto landscape was a very complete piece of recipe) was observed for a long period by their pupils, and may be thus briefly described :— The sky is always pure blue, paler at the horizon, and with a few streaky white clouds in it ; the ground is green even to the extreme distance, with brown rocks projecting from it ; water is blue streaked with white. The trees are nearly

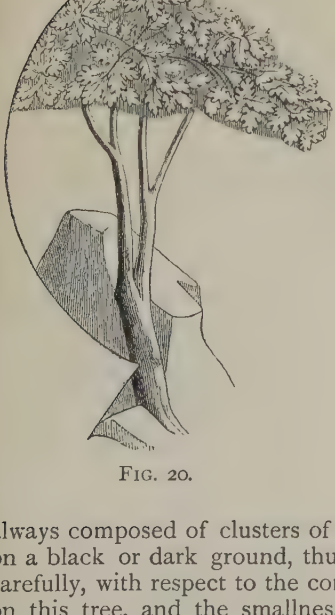

FIG. 20.

FIG. 21.

always composed of clusters of their proper leaves relieved on a black or dark ground, thus (*fig.* 20.).[1] And observe carefully, with respect to the complete drawing of the leaves on this tree, and the smallness of their number, the real distinction between noble conventionalism and false conventionalism. You will often hear modern architects

[1] Having no memoranda of my own, taken from Giotto's landscape, I had this tree copied from an engraving ; but I imagine the rude termination of the stems to be a misrepresentation. Fig. 21 is accurately copied from a MS., certainly executed between 1250 and 1270, and is more truly characteristic of the early manner.

defending their monstrous ornamentation on the ground that it is "conventional," and that architectural ornament ought to be conventionalised. Remember when you hear this, that noble conventionalism is not an agreement between the artist and spectator that the one shall misrepresent nature sixty times over, and the other believe the misrepresentation sixty times over, but it is an agreement that certain means and limitations being prescribed, only that *kind of truth* is to be expected which is consistent with those means. For instance, if Sir Joshua Reynolds had been talking to a friend about the character of a face, and there had been nothing in the room but a deal table and an inkbottle—and no pens—Sir Joshua would have dipped his finger in the ink, and painted a portrait on the table with his finger,—and a noble portrait too, certainly not delicate in outline, nor representing any of the qualities of the face dependent on rich outline, but getting as much of the face as in that manner was attainable. That is noble conventionalism, and Egyptian work on granite, or illuminator's work in glass, is all conventional in the same sense, but not conventionally false. The two noblest and *truest* carved lions I have ever seen, are the two granite ones in the Egyptian room of the British Museum, and yet in them, the lions' manes and beards are represented by rings of solid rock, as smooth as a mirror!

There are indeed one or two other conditions of noble conventionalism, noticed more fully in the Addenda to this Lecture; but you will find that they always consist in *stopping short* of nature, not in falsifying nature; and thus in Giotto's foliage, he *stops short* of the quantity of leaves on the real tree, but he gives you the form of the leaves represented with perfect truth. His foreground also is nearly always occupied by flowers and herbage, carefully and individually painted from nature; while, although thus simple in plan, the arrangements of line in these landscapes of course show the influence of the master-mind, and sometimes, where the story requires it, we find the usual formulæ overleaped, and Giotto at Avignon painting the breakers of the sea on a steep shore with great care, while Orcagna, in his Triumph of Death, has painted a thicket of brambles mixed with teazles, in a manner worthy of the best days of landscape art.

Now from the landscape of these two men to the landscape of Raphael, Leonardo, and Perugino, the advance consists principally in two great steps: The first, that distant objects were more or less invested with a blue colour,—the second, that trees were no longer painted with a black

Fig. 22.

ground, but with a rich dark brown, or deep green. From Giotto's old age, to the youth of Raphael, the advance in, and knowledge of, landscape, consisted of no more than these two simple steps; but the *execution* of landscape became infinitely more perfect and elaborate. All the flowers and leaves in the foreground were worked out with the same perfection as the features of the figures; in the

middle distance the brown trees were most delicately defined against the sky; the blue mountains in the extreme distance were exquisitely thrown into aërial gradations, and the sky and clouds were perfect in transparency and softness. But still there is no real advance in knowledge of natural objects. The leaves and flowers are, indeed, admirably painted, and thrown into various intricate groupings, such as Giotto could not have attempted, but the rocks and water are still as conventional and imperfect as ever, except only in colour: the forms of rock in Leonardo's celebrated "Vierge aux Rochers" are literally no better than those on a china plate. *Fig. 22.* shows a portion of them in mere outline, with one cluster of the leaves above, and the distant "ideal" mountains. On the whole, the most satisfactory work of the period is that which most resembles missal painting, that is to say, which is fullest of beautiful flowers and animals scattered among the landscape, in the old independent way, like the birds upon a screen. The landscape of Benozzo Gozzoli is exquisitely rich in incident of this kind.

The first man who entirely broke through the conventionality of his time, and painted pure landscape, was Masaccio, but he died too young to effect the revolution of which his genius was capable. It was left for other men to accomplish, namely, for Correggio and Titian. These two painters were the first who relieved the foregrounds of their landscape from the grotesque, quaint, and crowded formalism of the early painters; and gave a close approximation to the forms of nature in all things; retaining, however, thus much of the old system, that the distances were for the most part painted in deep ultramarine blue, the foregrounds in rich green and brown; there were no effects of sunshine and shadow, but a generally quiet glow over the whole scene; and the clouds, though now rolling in irregular masses, and sometimes richly involved among the hills, were never varied in conception, or studied from nature. There were no changes of weather in them, no rain clouds or fair-weather clouds, nothing but various shapes of the cumulus or cirrus, introduced for the sake of light on the deep blue sky. Tintoret and Bonifazio introduced more natural effects into this monotonous landscape: in their works we meet with showers of rain, with rainbows, sunsets, bright reflections in water, and so on; but still very subordinate, and carelessly

worked out, so as not to justify us in considering their landscape as forming a class by itself.

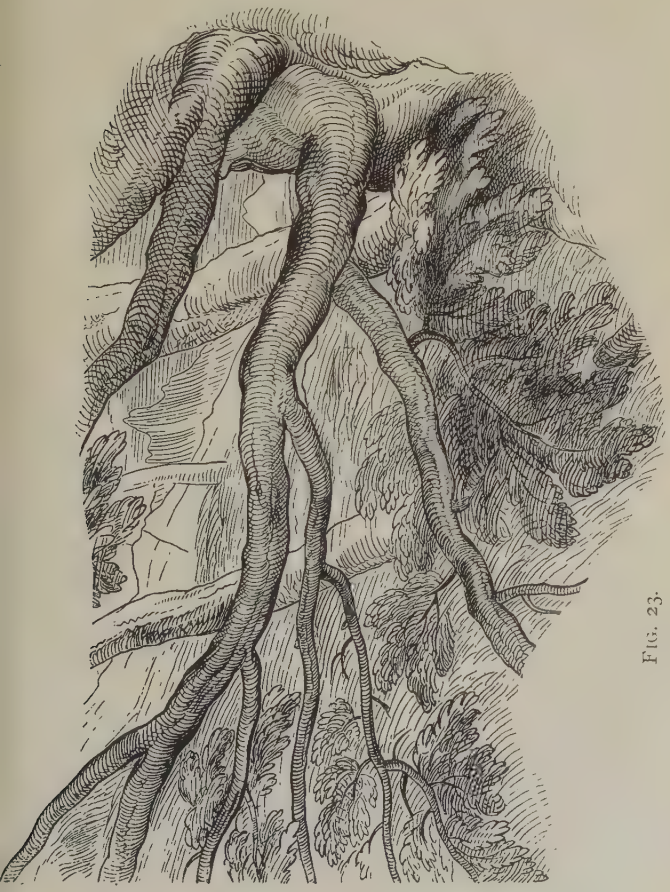

FIG. 23.

Fig. 23., which is a branch of a tree from the background of Titian's "St. Jerome," at Milan, compared with *fig.* 20., will give you a distinct idea of the kind of change which

took place from the time of Giotto to that of Titian, and you will find that this whole range of landscape may be conveniently classed in three divisions, namely, *Giottesque*, *Leonardesque*, and *Titianesque;* the Giottesque embracing nearly all the work of the 14th, the Leonardesque that of the 15th, and the Titianesque that of the 16th century. Now you see there remained a fourth step to be taken,—the doing away with conventionalism altogether, so as to create the perfect art of landscape painting. The course of the mind of Europe was to do this; but at the very moment when it ought to have been done, the art of all civilised nations was paralysed at once by the operation of the poisonous elements of infidelity and classical learning together, as I have endeavoured to show elsewhere. In this paralysis, like a soldier shot as he is just gaining an eminence, the art of the 17th century struggled forward, and sank upon the spot it had been endeavouring to attain. The step which should have freed landscape from conventionalism was actually taken by Claude and Salvator Rosa, but taken in a state of palsy,—taken so as to lose far more than was gained. For up to this time, no painter ever had thought of drawing anything, pebble or blade of grass, or tree or mountain, but as well and distinctly as he could; and if he could not draw it completely, he drew it at least in a way which should thoroughly show his knowledge and feeling of it. For instance, you saw in the oak tree of the Giottesque period, that the main points of the tree, the true shape of leaf and acorn, were all there, perfectly and carefully articulated, and so they continued to be down to the time of Tintoret; both he and Titian working out the separate leaves of their foliage with the most exquisite botanical care. But now observe: as Christianity had brought this love of nature into Paganism, the return of Paganism in the shape of classical learning at once destroyed this love of nature; and at the moment when Claude and Salvator made the final effort to paint the *effects* of nature faithfully, the *objects* of nature had ceased to be regarded with affection; so that, while people were amused and interested by the new effects of sunsets over green seas, and of tempests bursting on rocky mountains, which were introduced by the rising school, they entirely ceased to require on the one side, or bestow on the other, that care and thought by which alone the beauty

of nature can be understood. The older painting had resembled a careful and deeply studied diagram, illustrative of the most important facts; it was not to be understood or relished without application of serious thought; on the contrary, it developed and addressed the highest powers of mind belonging to the human race; while the Claude and Salvator painting was like a scene in a theatre, viciously and falsely painted throughout, and presenting a deceptive appearance of truth to nature; understood, as far as it went, in a moment, but conveying no accurate knowledge of anything, and, in all its operations on the mind, unhealthy, hopeless, and profitless.

It was, however, received with avidity; for this main reason, that the architecture, domestic life, and manners of the period were gradually getting more and more artificial; as I showed you last evening, all natural beauty had ceased to be permitted in architectural decoration, while the habits of society led them more and more to live, if possible, in cities; and the dress, language, and manners of men in general were approximating to that horrible and lifeless condition in which you find them just before the outbreak of the French Revolution.

Now, observe: exactly as hoops, and starch, and false hair, and all that in mind and heart these things typify and betray, as these, I say, gained upon men, there was a necessary reaction in favour of the *natural*. Men had never lived so utterly in defiance of the laws of nature before; but they could not do this without feeling a strange charm in that which they defied; and, accordingly, we find this reactionary sentiment expressing itself in a base school of what was called *pastoral* poetry; that is to say, poetry written in praise of the country, by men who lived in coffee-houses and on the Mall. The essence of pastoral poetry is the sense of strange delightfulness in grass, which is occasionally felt by a man who has seldom set his foot on it; it is essentially the poetry of the cockney, and for the most part corresponds in its aim and rank, as compared with other literature, to the porcelain shepherds and shepherdesses on a chimney-piece as compared with great works of sculpture.

Of course all good poetry, descriptive of rural life, is essentially pastoral, or has the effect of the pastoral on the

minds of men living in cities; but the class of poetry which I mean, and which you probably understand, by the term pastoral, is that in which a farmer's girl is spoken of as a "nymph," and a farmer's boy as a "swain," and in which, throughout, a ridiculous and unnatural refinement is supposed to exist in rural life, merely because the poet himself has neither had the courage to endure its hardships, nor the wit to conceive its realities. If you examine the literature of the past century, you will find that nearly all its expressions, having reference to the country, show something of this kind; either a foolish sentimentality, or a morbid fear, both of course coupled with the most curious ignorance. You will find all its descriptive expressions at once vague and monotonous. Brooks are always "purling;" birds always "warbling;" mountains always "lift their horrid peaks above the clouds;" vales always "are lost in the shadow of gloomy woods;" a few more distinct ideas about haymaking and curds and cream, acquired in the neighbourhood of Richmond Bridge, serving to give an occasional appearance of freshness to the catalogue of the sublime and beautiful which descended from poet to poet; while a few true pieces of pastoral, like the "Vicar of Wakefield," and Walton's "Angler," relieved the general waste of dulness. Even in these better productions, nothing is more remarkable than the general conception of the country merely as a series of green fields, and the combined ignorance and dread of more sublime scenery; of which the mysteries and dangers were enhanced by the difficulties of travelling at the period. Thus in Walton's "Angler," you have a meeting of two friends, one a Derbyshire man, the other a lowland traveller, who is as much alarmed, and uses nearly as many expressions of astonishment, at having to go down a steep hill and ford a brook, as a traveller uses now at crossing the glacier of the Col de Geant. I am not sure whether the difficulties which, until late years, have lain in the way of peaceful and convenient travelling, ought not to have great weight assigned to them among the other causes of the temper of the century; but be that as it may, if you will examine the whole range of its literature—keeping this point in view—I am well persuaded that you will be struck most forcibly by the strange deadness to the higher sources of landscape sublimity which is mingled with the morbid

pastoralism. The love of fresh air and green grass forced itself upon the animal natures of men; but that of the sublimer features of scenery had no place in minds whose chief powers had been repressed by the formalisms of the age. And although in the second-rate writers continually, and in the first-rate ones occasionally, you find an affectation of interest in mountains, clouds, and forests, yet whenever they write from their heart, you will find an utter absence of feeling respecting anything beyond gardens and grass. Examine, for instance, the novels of Smollett, Fielding, and Sterne, the comedies of Molière, and the writings of Johnson and Addison, and I do not think you will find a single expression of true delight in sublime nature in any one of them. Perhaps Sterne's "Sentimental Journey," in its total absence of sentiment on any subject but humanity, and its entire want of notice of anything at Geneva, which might not as well have been seen at Coxwold, is the most striking instance I could give you; and if you compare with this negation of feeling on one side, the interludes of Molière, in which shepherds and shepherdesses are introduced in court dress, you will have a very accurate conception of the general spirit of the age.

It was in such a state of society that the landscape of Claude, Gaspar Poussin, and Salvator Rosa attained its reputation. It is the complete expression on canvas of the spirit of the time. Claude embodies the foolish pastoralism, Salvator the ignorant terror, and Gaspar the dull and affected erudition.

It was, however, altogether impossible that this state of things could long continue. The age which had buried itself in formalism grew weary at last of the restraint; and the approach of a new æra was marked by the appearance, and the enthusiastic reception, of writers who took true delight in those wild scenes of nature which had so long been despised.

I think the first two writers in whom the symptoms of a change are strongly manifested are Mrs. Radcliffe and Rousseau; in both of whom the love of natural scenery, though mingled in the one case with what was merely dramatic, and in the other with much that was pitifully morbid or vicious, was still itself genuine, and intense, differing altogether in character from any sentiments pre-

viously traceable in literature. And then rapidly followed a group of writers, who expressed, in various ways, the more powerful or more pure feeling which had now become one of the strongest instincts of the age. Of these, the principal is your own Walter Scott. Many writers, indeed, describe nature more minutely and more profoundly; but none show in higher intensity the peculiar passion for what is majestic or lovely in *wild* nature, to which I am now referring. The whole of the poem of the "Lady of the Lake" is written with almost a boyish enthusiasm for rocks, and lakes, and cataracts; the early novels show the same instinct in equal strength wherever he approaches Highland scenery; and the feeling is mingled, observe, with a most touching and affectionate appreciation of the Gothic architecture, in which alone he found the elements of natural beauty seized by art; so that, to this day, his descriptions of Melrose and Holy Island Cathedral, in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" and "Marmion," as well as of the ideal abbeys in the "Monastery" and "Antiquary," together with those of Caerlaverock and Lochleven Castles in "Guy Mannering" and "The Abbot," remain the staple possessions and text-books of all travellers, not so much for their beauty or accuracy, as for their *exactly expressing that degree of feeling with which most men in this century can sympathise.*

Together with Scott appeared the group of poets,—Byron, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and, finally, Tennyson,—differing widely in moral principles and spiritual temper, but all agreeing more or less in this love for natural scenery.

Now, you will ask me—and you will ask me most reasonably—how this love of nature in modern days can be connected with Christianity, seeing it is as strong in the infidel Shelley as in the sacred Wordsworth. Yes, and it is found in far worse men than Shelley. Shelley was an honest unbeliever, and a man of warm affections; but this new love of nature is found in the most reckless and unprincipled of the French novelists,—in Eugene Sue, in Dumas, in George Sand,—and that intensely. How is this? Simply because the feeling is reactionary; and, in this phase of it, common to the diseased mind as well as to the healthy one. A man dying in the fever of intemperance will cry out for water, and that with a bitterer thirst than a man whose healthy frame naturally delights in the mountain spring more than

in the wine cup. The water is not dishonoured by that thirst of the diseased, nor is nature dishonoured by the love of the unworthy. That love is, perhaps, the only saving element in their minds; and it still remains an indisputable truth that the love of nature is a characteristic of the Christian heart, just as the hunger for healthy food is characteristic of the healthy frame.

In order to meet this new feeling for nature, there necessarily arose a new school of landscape painting. That school, like the literature to which it corresponded, had many weak and vicious elements mixed with its noble ones; it had its Mrs. Radcliffes and Rousseaus, as well as its Wordsworths; but, on the whole, the feeling with which Robson drew mountains, and Prout architecture, with which Fielding draws moors, and Stanfield sea—is altogether pure, true, and precious, as compared with that which suggested the landscape of the seventeenth century.

Now observe, how simple the whole subject becomes. You have, first, your great ancient landscape divided into its three periods—Giottesque, Leonardesque, Titianesque. Then you have a great gap, full of nonentities and abortions; a gulf of foolishness, into the bottom of which you may throw Claude and Salvator, neither of them deserving to give a name to anything. Call it "pastoral" landscape, "guarda e passa," and then you have, lastly, the pure, wholesome, simple, modern landscape. You want a name for that: I will give you one in a moment; for the whole character and power of that landscape is originally based on the work of one man.

Joseph Mallord William Turner was born in Maiden Lane, London, about eighty years ago. The register of his birth was burned, and his age at his death could only be arrived at by conjecture. He was the son of a barber; and his father intended him, very properly, for his own profession. The bent of the boy was, however, soon manifested, as is always the case in children of extraordinary genius, too strongly to be resisted, and a sketch of a coat of arms on a silver salver, made while his father was shaving a customer, obtained for him, in reluctant compliance with the admiring customer's advice, the permission to follow art as a profession.

He had, of course, the usual difficulties of young artists

to encounter, and they were then far greater than they are now. But Turner differed from most men in this,—that he was always willing to take anything to do that came in his way. He did not shut himself up in a garret to produce unsaleable works of "high art," and starve, or lose his senses. He hired himself out every evening to wash in skies in Indian ink, on other people's drawings, as many as he could, at half-a-crown a-night, getting his supper into the bargain. "What could I have done better?" he said afterwards: "it was first-rate practice." Then he took to illustrating guide-books and almanacks, and anything that wanted cheap frontispieces. The Oxford Almanack, published on a single sheet, with a copper-plate at the top of it, consisting of a "View"—you perhaps, some of you, know the kind of print characteristic of the last century, under which the word "View" is always printed in large letters, with a dedication, obsequious to the very dust, to the Grand Signior of the neighbourhood.—Well, this Almanack had always such a view of some Oxford College at the top of it, dedicated, I think, always to the head of the College; and it owed this, its principal decoration, to Turner for many years. I have myself two careful drawings of some old seals, made by him for a local book on the antiquities of Whalley Abbey. And there was hardly a gentleman's seat of any importance in England, towards the close of the last century, of which you will not find some rude engraving in the local publications of the time, inscribed with the simple name "W. Turner."

There was another great difference between Turner and other men. In doing these drawings for the commonest publications of the day, and for a remuneration altogether contemptible, he never did his work badly because he thought it beneath him, or because he was ill-paid. There does not exist such a thing as a slovenly drawing by Turner. With what people were willing to give him for his work he was content; but he considered that work in its relation to himself, not in its relation to the purchaser. He took a poor price, that he might *live;* but he made noble drawings, that he might *learn*. Of course some are slighter than others, and they vary in their materials; those executed with pencil and Indian ink being never finished to the degree of those which are executed in colour. But he is *never* careless. According to the time and means at his disposal, he always

did his best. He never let a drawing leave his hands without having made a step in advance, and having done better in it than he had ever done before; and there is no important drawing of the period which is not executed with a *total* disregard of time and price, and which was not, even then, worth four or five times what Turner received for it.

Even without genius, a man who thus felt and thus laboured was sure to do great things; though it is seldom that, without great genius, men either thus feel or thus labour. Turner was as far beyond all other men in intellect as in industry; and his advance in power and grasp of thought was as steady as the increasing light of sunrise.

His reputation was soon so far established that he was able to devote himself to more consistent study. He never appears literally to have *copied* any picture; but whenever any master interested him, or was of so established a reputation that he thought it necessary to study him, he painted pictures of his own subjects in the style of that master, until he felt himself able to rival his excellencies, whatever they were. There are thus multitudes of pictures by Turner which are direct imitations of other masters; especially of Claude, Wilson, Loutherbourg, Gaspar Poussin, Vandevelde, Cuyp, and Rembrandt. It has been argued by Mr. Leslie that, because Turner thus in his early years imitated many of the old masters, therefore he must to the end of his life have considered them greater than himself. The *non-sequitur* is obvious. I trust there are few men so unhappy as never to have learned anything from their inferiors; and I fear there are few men so wise as never to have imitated anything but what was deserving of imitation. The young Turner, indeed, would have been more than mortal if, in a period utterly devoid of all healthy examples of landscape art, he had been able at once to see his way to the attainment of his ultimate ends; or if, seeing it, he had felt himself at once strong enough to defy the authority of every painter and connoisseur whose style had formed the taste of the public, or whose dicta directed their patronage.

But the period when he both felt and resolved to assert his own superiority was indicated with perfect clearness, by his publishing a series of engravings, which were nothing else than direct challenges to Claude—then the landscape painter supposed to be the greatest in the world—upon his

own ground and his own terms. You are probably all aware that the studies made by Claude for his pictures, and kept by him under the name of the "Liber Veritatis," were for the most part made with pen and ink, washed over with a brown tint; and that these drawings have been carefully fac-similed and published in the form of mezzotint engravings, long supposed to be models of taste in landscape composition. In order to provoke comparison between Claude and himself, Turner published a series of engravings, called the "Liber Studiorum," executed in exactly the same manner as these drawings of Claude,—an etching representing what was done with the pen, while mezzotint stood for colour. You see the notable publicity of this challenge. Had he confined himself to *pictures* in his trial of skill with Claude, it would only have been in the gallery or the palace that the comparison could have been instituted; but now it is in the power of all who are interested in the matter to make it at their ease.[1]

* * * * * *

Now, what Turner did in contest with Claude, he did with every other then-known master of landscape, each in his turn. He challenged and vanquished, each in his own peculiar field, Vandevelde on the sea, Salvator among rocks, and Cuyp on Lowland rivers; and, having done this, set himself to paint the natural scenery of skies, mountains, and lakes, which, until his time, had never been so much as attempted.

He thus, in the extent of his sphere, far surpassed even Titian and Leonardo, the great men of the earlier schools. In their foreground work neither Titian nor Leonardo *could* be excelled; but Titian and Leonardo were thoroughly conventional in all *but* their foregrounds. Turner was equally great in all the elements of landscape, and it is on him, and on his daring additions to the received schemes of landscape

[1] When this Lecture was delivered, an enlarged copy of a portion of one of these studies by Claude was set beside a similarly magnified portion of one by Turner. It was impossible, without much increasing the cost of the publication, to prepare two mezzotint engravings with the care requisite for this purpose; and the portion of the Lecture relating to these examples is therefore omitted. It is however in the power of every reader to procure one or more plates of each series; and to judge for himself whether the conclusion of Turner's superiority, which is assumed in the next sentence of the text, be a just one or not.

art, that all modern landscape has been founded. You will never meet any truly great living landscape painter who will not at once frankly confess his obligations to Turner, not, observe, as having copied him, but as having been led by Turner to look in nature for what he would otherwise either not have discerned, or discerning, not have dared to represent.

Turner, therefore, was the first man who presented us with the *type* of perfect landscape art: and the richness of that art, with which you are at present surrounded, and which enables you to open your walls as it were into so many windows, through which you can see whatever has charmed you in the fairest scenery of your country, you will do well to remember as *Turneresque.*

So then you have these five periods to recollect—you will have no difficulty, I trust, in doing so,—the periods of Giotto, Leonardo, Titian, pastoralism, and Turner.

But Turner's work is yet only begun. His greatness is, as yet, altogether denied by many; and to the full, felt by very few. But every day that he lies in his grave will bring some new acknowledgment of his power; and through those eyes, now filled with dust, generations yet unborn will learn to behold the light of nature.

You have some ground to-night to accuse me of dogmatism. I can bring no proof before you of what I so boldly assert. But I would not have accepted your invitation to address you, unless I had felt that I had a right to be, in this matter, dogmatic. I did not come here to tell you of my beliefs or my conjectures; I came to tell you the truth which I have given fifteen years of my life to ascertain, that this man, this Turner, of whom you have known so little while he was living among you, will one day take his place beside Shakespeare and Verulam, in the annals of the light of England.

Yes: beside Shakespeare and Verulam, a third star in that central constellation, round which, in the astronomy of intellect, all other stars make their circuit. By Shakespeare, humanity was unsealed to you; by Verulam the *principles* of nature; and by Turner, her *aspect.* All these were sent to unlock one of the gates of light, and to unlock it for the first time. But of all the three, though not the greatest, Turner was the most unprecedented in his work. Bacon

did what Aristotle had attempted; Shakespeare did perfectly what Æschylus did partially; but none before Turner had lifted the veil from the face of nature; the majesty of the hills and forests had received no interpretation, and the clouds passed unrecorded from the face of the heaven which they adorned, and of the earth to which they ministered.

And now let me tell you something of his personal character. You have heard him spoken of as illnatured, and jealous of his brother artists. I will tell you how jealous he was. I knew him for ten years, and during that time had much familiar intercourse with him. I *never once* heard him say an unkind thing of a brother artist, and *I never once heard him find a fault* with another man's work. I could say this of *no other* artist whom I have ever known.

But I will add a piece of evidence on this matter of peculiar force. Probably many here have read a book which has been lately published, to my mind one of extreme interest and value, the life of the unhappy artist, Benjamin Haydon. Whatever may have been his faults, I believe no person can read his journal without coming to the conclusion that his heart was honest, and that he does not *wilfully* misrepresent any fact, or any person. Even supposing otherwise, the expression I am going to quote to you would have all the more force, because, as you know, Haydon passed his whole life in war with the Royal Academy, of which Turner was one of the most influential members. Yet in the midst of one of his most violent expressions of exultation at one of his victories over the Academy, he draws back suddenly with these words:—"But Turner behaved well, and did me justice."

I will give you however besides, two plain facts illustrative of Turner's "jealousy."

You have, perhaps not many of you, heard of a painter of the name of Bird: I do not myself know his works, but Turner saw some merit in them: and when Bird first sent a picture to the Academy, for exhibition, Turner was on the hanging committee. Bird's picture had great merit; but no place for it could be found. Turner pleaded hard for it. No, the thing was impossible. Turner sat down and looked at Bird's picture a long time; then insisted that a place must be found for it. He was still met by the assertion of impracticability. He said no more, but took down one of

his own pictures, sent it out of the Academy, and hung Bird's in its place.

Match that, if you can, among the annals of hanging committees. But he could do nobler things than this.

When Turner's picture of Cologne was exhibited in the year 1826, it was hung between two portraits, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, of Lady Wallscourt, and Lady Robert Manners.

The sky of Turner's picture was exceedingly bright, and it had a most injurious effect on the colour of the two portraits. Lawrence naturally felt mortified, and complained openly of the position of his pictures. You are aware that artists were at that time permitted to retouch their pictures on the walls of the Academy. On the morning of the opening of the exhibition, at the private view, a friend of Turner's who had seen the Cologne in all its splendour, led a group of expectant critics up to the picture. He started back from it in consternation. The golden sky had changed to a dun colour. He ran up to Turner, who was in another part of the room. "Turner, *what* have you been doing to your picture?" "Oh," muttered Turner, in a low voice, "poor Lawrence was so unhappy. It's only lamp black. It'll all wash off after the exhibition!" He had actually passed a wash of lamp black in water colour over the whole sky, and utterly spoiled his picture for the time, and so left it through the exhibition, lest it should hurt Lawrence's.

You may easily find instances of self-sacrifice where men have strong motives, and where large benefits are to be conferred by the effort, or general admiration obtained by it; but of pure, unselfish, and perfect generosity, showing itself in a matter of minor interest, and when few could be aware of the sacrifice made, you will not easily find such another example as this.

Thus much for his jealousy of his brother artists. You have also heard much of his niggardliness in money transactions. A great part of what you have heard is perfectly true, allowing for the exaggeration which always takes place in the accounts of an eccentric character. But there are other parts of Turner's conduct of which you have never heard; and which, if truly reported, would set his niggardliness in a very different light. Every person from whom Turner exacted a due shilling, proclaimed the exaction far and wide; but the persons to whom Turner gave hundreds

of pounds were prevented by their "delicacy," from reporting the kindness of their benefactor. I may, however, perhaps, be permitted to acquaint you with one circumstance of this nature, creditable alike to both parties concerned.

At the death of a poor drawing master, Mr. Wells, whom Turner had long known, he was deeply affected, and lent money to the widow until a large sum had accumulated. She was both honest and grateful, and after a long period was happy enough to be able to return to her benefactor the whole sum she had received from him. She waited on him with it; but Turner kept his hands in his pocket. "Keep it," he said, "and send your children to school, and to church." He said this in bitterness; he had himself been sent to neither.

Well, but, you will answer to me, we have heard Turner all our lives stigmatised as brutal, and uncharitable, and selfish, and miserly. How are we to understand these opposing statements?

Easily. I have told you truly what Turner was. You have often heard what to most people he appeared to be. Imagine what it was for a man to live seventy years in this hard world, with the kindest heart, and the noblest intellect of his time, and never to meet with a single word or ray of sympathy, until he felt himself sinking into the grave. From the time he knew his true greatness all the world was turned against him: he held his own; but it could not be without roughness of bearing, and hardening of the temper, if not of the heart. No one understood him, no one trusted him, and every one cried out against him. Imagine, any of you, the effect upon your own minds, if every voice that you heard from the human beings around you were raised, year after year, through all your lives, only in condemnation of your efforts, and denial of your success. This may be borne, and borne easily, by men who have fixed religious principles, or supporting domestic ties. But Turner had no one to teach him in his youth, and no one to love him in his old age. Respect and affection, if they came at all, came unbelieved, or came too late. Naturally irritable, though kind,—naturally suspicious, though generous,—the gold gradually became dim, and the most fine gold changed, or, if not changed, overcast and clouded. The deep heart

was still beating, but it was beneath a dark and melancholy mail, between whose joints, however, sometimes the slightest arrows found entrance, and power of giving pain. He received no consolation in his last years, nor in his death. Cut off in great part from all society,—first by labour, and at last by sickness,—hunted to his grave by the malignities of small critics, and the jealousies of hopeless rivalry, he died in the house of a stranger,—one companion of his life, and one only, staying with him to the last. The window of his death-chamber was turned towards the west, and the *sun* shone upon his face in its setting, and rested there, as he expired.

LECTURE IV

PRE-RAPHAELITISM

THE subject on which I would desire to engage your attention this evening, is the nature and probable result of a certain schism which took place a few years ago among our British artists.

This schism, or rather the heresy which led to it, as you are probably aware, was introduced by a small number of very young men; and consists mainly in the assertion that the principles on which art has been taught for these three hundred years back are essentially wrong, and that the principles which ought to guide us are those which prevailed before the time of Raphael; in adopting which, therefore, as their guides, these young men, as a sort of bond of unity among themselves, took the unfortunate and somewhat ludicrous name of "Pre-Raphaelite" brethren.

You must also be aware that this heresy has been opposed with all the influence and all the bitterness of art and criticism; but that in spite of these the heresy has gained ground, and the pictures painted on these new principles have obtained a most extensive popularity. These circumstances are sufficiently singular, but their importance is greater even than their singularity; and your time will certainly not be wasted in devoting an hour to an inquiry into the true nature of this movement.

I shall first, therefore, endeavour to state to you what the real difference is between the principles of art before and after Raphael's time, and then to ascertain, with you, how far these young men truly have understood the difference, and what may be hoped or feared from the effort they are making.

First, then, What is the real difference between the principles on which art has been pursued before and since Raphael? You must be aware, that the principal ground on which the Pre-Raphaelites have been attacked, is the charge that they wish to bring us back to a time of darkness and ignorance, when the principles of drawing, and of art in general, were comparatively unknown; and this attack, therefore, is entirely founded on the assumption that, although for some unaccountable reason we cannot at present produce artists altogether equal to Raphael, yet that we are on the whole in a state of greater illumination than, at all events, any artists who preceded Raphael; so that we consider ourselves entitled to look down upon them, and to say that, all things considered, they did some wonderful things for their time; but that, as for comparing the art of Giotto to that of Wilkie or Edwin Landseer, it would be perfectly ridiculous,—the one being a mere infant in his profession, and the others accomplished workmen.

Now, that this progress has in some things taken place is perfectly true; but it is true also that this progress is by no means the main thing to be noticed respecting ancient and modern art; that there are other circumstances, connected with the change from one to the other, immeasurably more important, and which, until very lately, have been altogether lost sight of.

The fact is, that modern art is not so much distinguished from old art by greater skill, as by a radical change in temper. The art of this day is not merely a more *knowing* art than that of the 13th century,—it is altogether another art. Between the two there is a great gulf, a distinction for ever ineffaceable. The change from one to the other was not that of the child into the man, as we usually consider it; it was that of the chrysalis into the butterfly. There was an entire change in the habits, food, method of existence, and heart of the whole creature. That we know more than 13th-century people is perfectly true; but that is not the

essential difference between us and them. We are different kind of creatures from them,—as different as moths are different from caterpillars; and different in a certain broad and vast sense, which I shall try this evening to explain and prove to you;—different not merely in this or that result of minor circumstances,—not as you are different from people who never saw a locomotive engine, or a Highlander of this century from a Highlander of 1745;—different in a far broader and mightier sense than that, in a sense so great and clear, that we are enabled to separate all the Christian nations and tongues of the early time from those of the latter time, and speak of them in one group as the kingdoms of the Middle Ages. There is an infinite significance in that term, which I want you to dwell upon and work out; it is a term which we use in a dim consciousness of the truth, but without fully penetrating into that of which we are conscious. I want to deepen and make clear to you this consciousness that the world has had essentially a Trinity of ages—the Classical Age, the Middle Age, the Modern Age; each of these embracing races and individuals of apparently enormous separation in kind, but united in the spirit of their age,—the Classical Age having its Egyptians and Ninevites, Greeks and Romans,—the Middle Age having its Goths and Franks, Lombards and Italians,—the Modern Ages having their French and English, Spaniards and Germans; but all these distinctions being in each case subordinate to the mightier and broader distinction, between *Classicalism*, *Mediævalism*, and *Modernism*.

Now our object to-night is indeed only to inquire into a matter of art; but we cannot do so properly until we consider this art in its relation to the inner spirit of the age in which it exists; and by doing so we shall not only arrive at the most just conclusions respecting our present subject, but we shall obtain the means of arriving at just conclusions respecting many other things.

Now the division of time which the Pre-Raphaelites have adopted, in choosing Raphael as the man whose works mark the separation between Mediævalism and Modernism, is perfectly accurate. It has been accepted as such by all their opponents.

You have, then, the three periods: Classicalism, extending to the fall of the Roman empire; Mediævalism, extending

from that fall to the close of the 15th century; and Modernism, thenceforward to our days.

And in examining into the spirit of these three epochs, observe, I don't mean to compare their bad men,—I don't mean to take Tiberius as a type of Classicalism, nor Ezzelin as a type of Mediævalism, nor Robespierre as a type of Modernism. Bad men are like each other in all epochs; and in the Roman, the Paduan, or the Parisian, sensuality and cruelty admit of little distinction in the manners of their manifestation. But among men comparatively virtuous, it is important to study the phases of character; and it is into these only that it is necessary for us to inquire. Consider therefore, first, the essential difference in character between three of the most devoted military heroes whom the three great epochs of the world have produced,—all three devoted to the service of their country,—all of them dying therein. I mean, Leonidas in the Classical period, St. Louis in the Mediæval period, and Lord Nelson in the Modern period.

Leonidas had the most rigid sense of duty, and died with the most perfect faith in the gods of his country, fulfilling the accepted prophecy of his death. St. Louis had the most rigid sense of duty, and the most perfect faith in Christ. Nelson had the most rigid sense of duty, and——

You must supply my pause with your charity.

Now you do not suppose that the main difference between Leonidas and Nelson lay in the modern inventions at the command of the one, as compared with the imperfect military instruments possessed by the other. They were not essentially different, in that the one fought with lances and the other with guns. But they were essentially different in the whole tone of their religious belief.

By this instance you may be partially prepared for the bold statement I am going to make to you, as to the change which constitutes modernism. I said just now that it was like that of the worm to the butterfly. But the changes which God causes in his lower creatures are almost always from worse to better, while the changes which God allows man to make in himself are very often quite the other way; like Adam's new arrangement of his nature. And in saying that this last change was like that of a chrysalis, I meant only in the completeness of it, not in the tendency of it.

Instead of from the worm to the butterfly, it is very possible it may have been from the butterfly to the worm.

Have patience with me for a moment after I tell you what I believe it to have been, and give me a little time to justify my words.

I say that Classicalism began, wherever civilisation began, with Pagan Faith. Mediævalism began, and continued, wherever civilisation began and continued to *confess* Christ. And, lastly, Modernism began and continues, wherever civilisation began and continues to *deny* Christ.

You are startled, but give me a moment to explain. What, you would say to me, do you mean to tell us that *we* deny Christ? we who are essentially modern in every one of our principles and feelings, and yet all of us professing believers in Christ, and we trust most of us true ones? I answer, So far as we are believers indeed, we are one with the faithful of all times,—one with the classical believer of Athens and Ephesus, and one with the mediæval believer of the banks of the Rhone and the valleys of the Monte Viso. But so far as, in various strange ways, some in great and some in small things, we deny this belief, in so far we are essentially infected with this spirit, which I call modernism.

For observe, the change of which I speak has nothing whatever to do with the Reformation, or with any of its effects. It is a far broader thing than the Reformation. It is a change which has taken place, not only in reformed England, and reformed Scotland; but in unreformed France, in unreformed Italy, in unreformed Austria. I class honest Protestants and honest Roman Catholics for the present together, under the general term Christians: if you object to their being so classed together, I pray your pardon, but allow me to do so at present, for the sake of perspicuity, if for nothing else; and so classing them, I say that a change took place, about the time of Raphael, in the spirit of Roman Catholics and Protestants both; and that change consisted in the *denial* of their religious belief, at least in the external and trivial affairs of life, and often in far more serious things.

For instance, hear this direction to an upholsterer of the early 13th century. Under the commands of the sheriff of Wiltshire, he is thus ordered to make some alterations in a

room for Henry the Third. He is to "wainscot the King's lower chamber, and to paint that wainscot of a green colour, and to put a border to it, and to cause the heads of kings and queens to be painted on the borders; and to paint on the walls of the King's upper chamber the story of St. Margaret, Virgin, and the four Evangelists, and to paint the wainscot of the same chamber of a green colour, spotted with gold."[1]

Again, the sheriff of Wiltshire is ordered to "put two small glass windows in the chamber of Edward the King's son; and put a glass window in the chamber of our Queen at Clarendon; and in the same window cause to be painted a Mary with her Child, and at the feet of the said Mary, a queen with clasped hands."

Again, the sheriff of Southampton is ordered to "paint the tablet beside the King's bed, with the figures of the guards of the bed of Solomon, and to glaze with white glass the windows in the King's great Hall at Northampton, and cause the history of Lazarus and Dives to be painted in the same."

And so on; I need not multiply instances. You see that in all these cases, the furniture of the King's house is made to confess his Christianity. It may be imperfect and impure Christianity, but such as it might be, it was all that men had then to live and die by; and you see there was not a pane of glass in their windows, nor a pallet by their bedside that did not confess and proclaim it. Now, when you go home to your own rooms, supposing them to be richly decorated at all, examine what that decoration consists of. You will find Cupids, Graces, Floras, Dianas, Jupiters, Junos. But you will not find, except in the form of an engraving, bought principally for its artistic beauty, either Christ, or the Virgin, or Lazarus and Dives. And if a thousand years hence, any curious investigator were to dig up the ruins of Edinburgh, and not know your history, he would think you had all been born heathens. Now that, so far as it goes, is denying Christ; it is pure Modernism.

No, you will answer me, "you misunderstand and calumniate us. We do not, indeed, choose to have Dives and Lazarus on our windows; but that is not because we

[1] Liberate Rolls, preserved in the Tower of London, and quoted by Mr. Turner in his History of the Domestic Architecture of England.

are moderns, but because we are Protestants, and do not like religious imagery." Pardon me: that is not the reason. Go into any fashionable lady's boudoir in Paris, and see if you will find Dives and Lazarus there. You will find, indeed, either that she has her private chapel, or that she has a crucifix in her dressing room; but for the general decoration of the house, it is all composed of Apollos and Muses, just as it is here.

Again. What do you suppose was the substance of good education, the education of a knight, in the Middle Ages? What was taught to a boy as soon as he was able to learn anything? First, to keep under his body, and bring it into subjection and perfect strength; then to take Christ for his captain, to live as always in his presence and, finally, to do his *devoir*—mark the word—to all men? Now, consider first, the difference in their influence over the armies of France, between the ancient word "devoir," and modern word "gloire." And, again, ask yourselves what you expect your own children to be taught at your great schools and universities. Is it Christian history, or the histories of Pan and Silenus? Your present education, to all intents and purposes, denies Christ, and that is intensely and peculiarly modernism.

Or, again, what do you suppose was the proclaimed and understood principle of all Christian *governments* in the middle ages? I do not say it was a principle acted up to, or that the cunning and violence of wicked men had not too often their full sway then, as now; but on what principles were that cunning and violence, so far as was possible, restrained? By the *confessed* fear of God, and *confessed* authority of his law. You will find that all treaties, laws, transactions whatsoever, in the middle ages, are based on a confession of Christianity as the leading rule of life; that a text of Scripture is held, in all public assemblies, strong enough to be set against an appearance of expediency; and although, in the end, the expediency might triumph, yet it was never without a distinct allowance of Christian principle, as an efficient element in the consultation. Whatever error might be committed, at least Christ was openly confessed. Now what is the custom of your British Parliament in these days? You know that nothing would excite greater manifestations of contempt and disgust than the slightest attempt

to introduce the authority of Scripture in a political consultation. That is denying Christ. It is intensely and peculiarly modernism.

It would be easy to go on showing you this same thing in many more instances; but my business to-night is to show you its full effect in one thing only, namely, in art, and I must come straightway to that, as I have little enough time. This, then, is the great and broad fact which distinguishes modern art from old art; that all ancient art was *religious*, and all modern art is *profane*. Once more, your patience for an instant. I say, all ancient art was religious; that is to say, religion was its first object; private luxury or pleasure its second. I say, all modern art is profane; that is, private luxury or pleasure is its first object; religion its second. Now you all know, that anything which makes religion its second object, makes religion *no* object. God will put up with a great many things in the human heart, but there is one thing he will *not* put up with in it—a second place. He who offers God a second place, offers him no place. And there is another mighty truth which you all know, that he who makes religion his first object, makes it his whole object: he has no other work in the world than God's work. Therefore I do not say that ancient art was *more* religious than modern art. There is no question of degree in this matter. Ancient art was religious art; modern art is profane art; and between the two the distinction is as firm as between light and darkness.

Now, do not let what I say be encumbered in your minds with the objection, that you think art ought not to be brought into the service of religion. That is not the question at present—do not agitate it. The simple fact is, that old art *was* brought into that service, and received therein a peculiar form; that modern art *is not* brought into that service, and has received in consequence another form; that this is the great distinction between mediæval and modern art; and from that are clearly deducible all other essential differences between them. That is the point I wish to show you, and of that there can be no dispute. Whether or not Christianity be the purer for lacking the service of art, is disputable—and I do not mean now to begin the dispute; but that art is the *impurer* for not being in the service of

Christianity, is indisputable, and that is the main point I have now to do with.

Perhaps there are some of you here who would not allow that the religion of the 13th century was Christianity. Be it so, still is the statement true, which is all that is necessary for me now to prove, that art was great because it was devoted to such religion as then existed. Grant that Roman Catholicism was not Christianity—grant it, if you will, to be the same thing as old heathenism,—and still I say to you, whatever it was, men lived and died by it, the ruling thought of all their thoughts; and just as classical art was greatest in building to its gods, so mediæval art was great in building to its gods, and modern art is not great, because it builds to *no* God. You have for instance, in your Edinburgh Library, a Bible of the 13th century, the Latin Bible, commonly known as the Vulgate. It contains the Old and New Testaments, complete, besides the books of Maccabees, the Wisdom of Solomon, the books of Judith, Baruch, and Tobit. The whole is written in the most beautiful black-letter hand, and each book begins with an illuminated letter, containing three or four figures, illustrative of the book which it begins. Now, whether this were done in the service of true Christianity or not, the simple fact is, that here is a man's lifetime taken up in writing and ornamenting a Bible, as the sole end of his art; and that doing this either in a book, or on a wall, was the common artist's life at the time; that the constant Bible reading and Bible thinking which this work involved, made a man serious and thoughtful, and a good workman, because he was always expressing those feelings which, whether right or wrong, were the groundwork of his whole being. Now, about the year 1500, this entire system was changed. Instead of the life of Christ, men had, for the most part, to paint the lives of Bacchus and Venus; and if you walk through any public gallery of pictures by the "great masters," as they are called, you will indeed find here and there what is called a Holy Family, painted for the sake of drawing pretty children, or a pretty woman; but for the most part you will find nothing but Floras, Pomonas, Satyrs, Graces, Bacchanals, and Banditti. Now you will not declare—you cannot believe,—that Angelico painting the life of Christ, Benozzo painting the life of Abraham, Ghirlandajo painting the life of the Virgin,

Giotto painting the life of St. Francis, were worse employed, or likely to produce a less healthy art, than Titian painting the loves of Venus and Adonis, than Correggio painting the naked Antiope, than Salvator painting the slaughters of the thirty years' war? If you will not let me call the one kind of labour Christian, and the other unchristian, at least you will let me call the one moral, and the other immoral, and that is all I ask you to admit.

Now observe, hitherto I have been telling you what you may feel inclined to doubt or dispute; and I must leave you to consider the subject at your leisure. But henceforward I tell you plain facts, which admit neither of doubt nor dispute by any one who will take the pains to acquaint himself with their subject-matter.

When the entire purpose of art was moral teaching, it naturally took truth for its first object, and beauty, and the pleasure resulting from beauty, only for its second. But when it lost all purpose of moral teaching, it as naturally took beauty for its first object, and truth for its second.

That is to say, in all they did, the old artists endeavoured, in one way or another, to express the real facts of the subject or event, this being their chief business: and the question they first asked themselves was always, how would this thing, or that, actually have occurred? what would this person, or that, have done under the circumstances? and then, having formed their conception, they work it out with only a secondary regard to grace, or beauty, while a modern painter invariably thinks of the grace and beauty of his work first, and unites afterwards as much truth as he can with its conventional graces. I will give you a single strong instance to make my meaning plainer. In Orcagna's great fresco of the Triumph of Death, one of the incidents is that three kings,[1] when out hunting, are met by a spirit, which, desiring

[1] This incident is not of Orcagna's invention, it is variously represented in much earlier art. There is a curious and graphic drawing of it, *circa* 1300, in the MS. Arundel 83. Brit. Mus., in which the three dead persons are walking, and are met by three queens, who severally utter the sentences,

"Ich am aferd."
"Lo, whet ich se?"
"Me thinketh hit beth develes thre."

them to follow it, leads them to a churchyard, and points out to them, in open coffins, three bodies of kings such as themselves, in the last stage of corruption. Now a modern artist, representing this, would have endeavoured dimly and faintly to suggest the appearance of the dead bodies, and would have made, or attempted to make, the countenances of the three kings variously and solemnly expressive of thought. This would be in his, or our, view, a poetical and tasteful treatment of the subject. But Orcagna disdains both poetry and taste; he wants the *facts* only; he wishes to give the spectator the same lesson that the kings had; and therefore, instead of concealing the dead bodies, he paints them with the most fearful detail. And then, he does not consider what the three kings might most gracefully do. He considers only what they actually in all probability *would have done*. He makes them looking at the coffins with a startled stare, and one holding his nose. This is an extreme instance; but you are not to suppose it is because Orcagna had naturally a coarse or prosaic mind. Where he felt that thoughtfulness and beauty could properly be introduced, as in his circles of saints and prophets, no painter of the middle ages is so grand. I can give you no better proof of this, than the one fact that Michael Angelo borrowed from him openly,—borrowed from him in the principal work which he ever executed, the Last Judgment, and borrowed from him the principal figure in that work. But it is just because Orcagna was so firmly and unscrupulously true, that he had the power of being so great when he chose. His arrow went straight to the mark. It was not that he did not love beauty, but he loved truth first.

So it was with all the men of that time. No painters ever had more power of conceiving graceful form, or more profound devotion to the beautiful; but all these gifts and affections are kept sternly subordinate to their moral purpose; and, so far as their powers and knowledge went, they

To which the dead bodies answer :—

"Ich wes wel fair."
"Such schelt ou be."
"For Godes love, be wer by me."

It is curious, that though the dresses of the living persons, and the "I was well fair" of the first dead speaker, seem to mark them distinctly to be women, some longer legends below are headed "primus *rex* mortuus," &c.

either painted from nature things as they were, or from imagination things as they must have been.

I do not mean that they reached any imitative resemblance to nature. They had neither skill to do it, nor care to do it. Their art was conventional and imperfect, but they considered it only as a language wherein to convey the knowledge of certain facts; it was perfect enough for that; and though always reaching on to greater attainments, they never suffered their imperfections to disturb and check them in their immediate purposes. And this mode of treating all subjects was persisted in by the greatest men until the close of the 15th century.

Now so justly have the Pre-Raphaelites chosen their time and name, that the great change which clouds the career of mediæval art was effected, not only in Raphael's time, but by Raphael's own practice, and by his practice in *the very centre of his available life.*

You remember, doubtless, what high ground we have for placing the beginning of human intellectual strength at about the age of twelve years.[1] Assume, therefore, this period for the beginning of Raphael's strength. He died at thirty-seven. And in his twenty-fifth year, one half-year only past the precise centre of his available life, he was sent for to Rome, to decorate the Vatican for Pope Julius II., and having until that time worked exclusively in the ancient and stern mediæval manner, he, in the first chamber which he decorated in that palace, wrote upon its walls the *Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*, of the Arts of Christianity.

And he wrote it thus: On one wall of that chamber he placed a picture of the World or Kingdom of *Theology*, presided over by *Christ*. And on the side wall of that same chamber he placed the World or Kingdom of *Poetry*, presided over by *Apollo*. And from that spot, and from that hour, the intellect and the art of Italy date their degradation.

Observe, however, the significance of this fact is not in the mere use of the figure of the heathen god to indicate the domain of poetry. Such a symbolical use had been made of the figures of heathen deities in the best times of Christian art. But it is in the fact, that being called to Rome especially to adorn the palace of the so-called head of the church, and called as the chief representative of the

[1] Luke ii. 42, 49.

Christian artists of his time, Raphael had neither religion nor originality enough to trace the spirit of poetry and the spirit of philosophy to the inspiration of the true God, as well as that of theology; but that, on the contrary, *he elevated the creations of fancy on the one wall, to the same rank as the objects of faith upon the other;* that in deliberate, balanced, opposition to the Rock of the Mount Zion, he reared the rock of Parnassus, and the rock of the Acropolis; that, among the masters of poetry we find him enthroning Petrarch and Pindar, but not Isaiah nor David, and for lords over the domain of philosophy we find the masters of the school of Athens, but neither of those greater masters by the last of whom that school was rebuked,—those who received their wisdom from heaven itself, in the vision of Gibeon,[1] and the lightning of Damascus.

The doom of the arts of Europe went forth from that chamber, and it was brought about in great part by the very excellencies of the man who had thus marked the commencement of decline. The perfection of execution and the beauty of feature which were attained in his works, and in those of his great contemporaries, rendered finish of execution and beauty of form the chief objects of all artists; and thenceforward execution was looked for rather than thought, and beauty rather than veracity.

And as I told you, these are the two secondary causes of the decline of art; the first being the loss of moral purpose. Pray note them clearly. In mediæval art, thought is the first thing, execution the second; in modern art execution is the first thing, and thought the second. And again, in mediæval art, truth is first, beauty second; in modern art, beauty is first, truth second. The mediæval principles led *up* to Raphael, and the modern principles lead *down* from him.

Now, first, let me give you a familiar illustration of the difference with respect to execution. Suppose you have to teach two children drawing, one thoroughly clever and active-minded, the other dull and slow; and you put before them Jullien's chalk studies of heads—*etudes à deux crayons*—and desire them to be copied. The dull child will slowly do your bidding, blacken his paper and rub it white again, and patiently and painfully, in the course of three or four

[1] 1 Kings iii. 5.

years, attain to the performance of a chalk head, not much worse than his original, but still of less value than the paper it is drawn upon. But the clever child will not, or will only by force, consent to this discipline. He finds other means of expressing himself with his pencil somehow or another; and presently you find his paper covered with sketches of his grandfather and grandmother, and uncles, and cousins, —sketches of the room, and the house, and the cat, and the dog, and the country outside, and everything in the world he can set his eyes on; and he gets on, and even his child's work has a value in it—a truth which makes it worth keeping; no one knows how precious, perhaps, that portrait of his grandfather may be, if any one has but the sense to keep it till the time when the old man can be seen no more up the lawn, nor by the wood. That child is working in the middle-age spirit—the other in the modern spirit.

But there is something still more striking in the evils which have resulted from the modern regardlessness of truth. Consider, for instance, its effect on what is called historical painting. What do you at present *mean* by historical painting? Now-a-days, it means the endeavouring, by the power of imagination, to portray some historical event of past days. But in the middle ages, it meant representing the acts of *their own* days; and that is the only historical painting worth a straw. Of all the wastes of time and sense which modernism has invented—and they are many—none are so ridiculous as this endeavour to represent past history. What do you suppose our descendants will care for our imaginations of the events of former days? Suppose the Greeks, instead of representing their own warriors as they fought at Marathon, had left us nothing but their imaginations of Egyptian battles; and suppose the Italians, in like manner, instead of portraits of Can Grande and Dante, or of Leo the Tenth and Raphael, had left us nothing but imaginary portraits of Pericles and Miltiades? What fools we should have thought them! how bitterly we should have been provoked with their folly! And that is precisely what our descendants will feel towards us, so far as our grand historical and classical schools are concerned. What do we care, they will say, what those 19th century people fancied about Greek and Roman history! If they had left us a few plain and rational sculptures and pictures of their own battles, and

their own men, in their everyday dress, we should have thanked them. Well, but, you will say, we *have* left them portraits of our great men, and paintings of our great battles. Yes, you have indeed, and that is the only historical painting that you either have, or can have; but you don't *call* that historical painting. You don't thank the men who do it; you look down upon them and dissuade them from it, and tell them they don't belong to the grand schools. And yet they are the only true historical painters, and the only men who will produce any effect on their own generation, or on any other. Wilkie was an historical painter, Chantrey an historical sculptor, because they painted, or carved, the veritable things and men they saw, not men and things as they believed they might have been, or should have been. But no one tells such men they are historical painters, and they are discontented with what they do; and poor Wilkie must needs travel to see the grand school, and imitate the grand school, and ruin himself. And you have had multitudes of other painters ruined, from the beginning, by that grand school. There was Etty, naturally as good a painter as ever lived, but no one told him what to paint, and he studied the antique, and the grand schools, and painted dances of nymphs in red and yellow shawls to the end of his days. Much good may they do you! He is gone to the grave, a lost mind. There was Flaxman, another naturally great man, with as true an eye for nature as Raphael,—he stumbles over the blocks of the antique statues—wanders in the dark valley of their ruins to the end of his days. He has left you a few outlines of muscular men straddling and frowning behind round shields. Much good may they do you! Another lost mind. And of those who are lost namelessly, who have not strength enough even to make themselves known, the poor pale students who lie buried for ever in the abysses of the great schools, no account can be rendered; they are numberless.

And the wonderful thing is, that of all these men whom you now have come to call the great masters, there was *not one* who confessedly did not paint his own present world, plainly and truly. Homer sang of what he saw; Phidias carved what he saw; Raphael painted the men of his own time in their own caps and mantles; and every man who has arisen to eminence in modern times has done so altogether

by his working in their way, and doing the things he saw. How did Reynolds rise? Not by painting Greek women, but by painting the glorious little living ladies this, and ladies that, of his own time. How did Hogarth rise? Not by painting Athenian follies, but London follies. Who are the men who have made an impression upon you yourselves,—upon your own age? I suppose the most popular painter of the day is Landseer. Do you suppose he studied dogs and eagles out of the Elgin Marbles? And yet in the very face of these plain, incontrovertible, all-visible facts, we go on from year to year with the base system of Academy teaching, in spite of which every one of these men have risen: I say *in spite* of the entire method and aim of our art-teaching. It destroys the greater number of its pupils altogether; it hinders and paralyses the greatest. There is not a living painter whose eminence is not in spite of everything he has been taught from his youth upwards, and who, whatever his eminence may be, has not suffered much injury in the course of his victory. For observe: this love of what is called ideality or beauty in preference to truth, operates not only in making us choose the past rather than the present for our subjects, but it makes us falsify the present when we do take it for our subject. I said just now that portrait-painters were historical painters;—so they are; but not good ones, because not faithful ones. The beginning and end of modern portraiture is adulation. The painters cannot live but by flattery; we should desert them if they spoke honestly. And therefore we can have no good portraiture; for in the striving after that which is *not* in their model, they lose the inner and deeper nobleness which *is* in their model. I saw not long ago, for the first time, the portrait of a man whom I knew well,—a young man, but a religious man,—and one who had suffered much from sickness. The whole dignity of his features and person depended upon the expression of serene, yet solemn, purpose sustaining a feeble frame; and the painter, by way of flattering him, strengthened him, and made him athletic in body, gay in countenance, idle in gesture; and the whole power and being of the man himself were lost. And this is still more the case with our public portraits. You have a portrait, for instance, of the Duke of Wellington at the end of the North Bridge,—one of the thousand equestrian statues of Modernism,—studied from

the show-riders of the amphitheatre, with their horses on their hind-legs in the sawdust.[1] Do you suppose that was the way the Duke sat when your destinies depended on him? when the foam hung from the lips of his tired horse, and its wet limbs were dashed with the bloody slime of the battle-field, and he himself sat anxious in his quietness, grieved in his fearlessness, as he watched, scythe-stroke by scythe-stroke, the gathering in of the harvest of death? You would have done something had you thus left his image in the enduring iron, but nothing now.

But the time has at last come for all this to be put an end to; and nothing can well be more extraordinary than the way in which the men have risen who are to do it. Pupils in the same schools, receiving precisely the same instruction which for so long a time has paralysed every one of our painters,—these boys agree in disliking to copy the antique statues set before them. They copy them as they are bid, and they copy them better than any one else; they carry

[1] I intended this last sentence of course to apply to the thousand statues, not definitely to the one in immediate question, which, though tainted with the modern affectation, and the nearest example of it to which I could refer an Edinburgh audience, is the work of a most promising sculptor; and was indeed so far executed on the principles asserted in the text, that the Duke gave Mr. Steele a sitting on horseback, in order that his mode of riding might be accurately represented. This, however, does not render the following remarks in the text nugatory, as it may easily be imagined that the action of the Duke, exhibiting his riding in his own grounds, would be different from his action, or inaction, when watching the course of a battle.

I must also make a most definite exception in favour of Marochetti, who seems to me a thoroughly great sculptor; and whose statue of Cœur de Lion, though, according to the principle just stated, not to be considered an *historical* work, is an *ideal* work of the highest beauty and value. Its erection in front of Westminster Hall will tend more to educate the public eye and mind with respect to art, than anything we have done in London for centuries.

* * * * * * *

April 21st.—I stop the press in order to insert the following paragraph from to-day's Times:—"THE STATUE OF CŒUR DE LION.—*Yesterday morning a number of workmen were engaged in pulling down the cast which was placed in New Palace Yard of the colossal equestrian statue of Richard Cœur de Lion. Sir C. Barry was, we believe, opposed to the cast remaining there any longer, and to the putting up of the statue itself on the same site, because it did not harmonise with the building. During the day the horse and figure were removed, and before night the pedestal was demolished and take away.*'

off prize after prize, and yet they hate their work. At last they are admitted to study from the life; they find the life very different from the antique, and say so. Their teachers tell them the antique is the best, and they mustn't copy the life. They agree among themselves that they like the life, and that copy it they will. They do copy it faithfully, and their masters forthwith declare them to be lost men. Their fellow-students hiss them whenever they enter the room. They can't help it; they join hands and tacitly resist both the hissing and the instruction. Accidentally, a few prints of the works of Giotto, a few casts from those of Ghiberti, fall into their hands, and they see in these something they never saw before—something intensely and everlastingly true. They examine farther into the matter; they discover for themselves the greater part of what I have laid before you to-night; they form themselves into a body, and enter upon that crusade which has hitherto been victorious. And which will be absolutely and triumphantly victorious. The great mistake which has hitherto prevented the public mind from fully going with them must soon be corrected. That mistake was the supposition that, instead of wishing to recur to the *principles* of the early ages, these men wished to bring back the *ignorance* of the early ages. This notion, grounded first on some hardness in their earlier works, which resulted—as it must always result—from the downright and earnest effort to paint nature as in a looking-glass, was fostered partly by the jealousy of their beaten competitors, and partly by the pure, perverse, and hopeless ignorance of the whole body of art-critics, so called, connected with the press. No notion was ever more baseless or more ridiculous. It was asserted that the Pre-Raphaelites did not draw well, in the face of the fact, that the principal member of their body, from the time he entered the schools of the Academy, had literally encumbered himself with the medals, given as prizes for drawing. It was asserted that they did not draw in perspective, by men who themselves knew no more of perspective than they did of astrology; it was asserted that they sinned against the appearances of nature, by men who had never drawn so much as a leaf or a blossom from nature in their lives. And, lastly, when all these calumnies or absurdities would tell no more, and it began to be forced upon men's unwilling belief that the style of the Pre-Raphaelites *was* true and was

according to nature, the last forgery invented respecting them is, that they copy photographs. You observe how completely this last piece of malice defeats all the rest. It admits they are true to nature, though only that it may deprive them of all merit in being so. But it may itself be at once refuted by the bold challenge to their opponents to produce a Pre-Raphaelite picture, or anything like one, by themselves copying a photograph.

Let me at once clear your minds from all these doubts, and at once contradict all these calumnies.

Pre-Raphaelitism has but one principle, that of absolute, uncompromising truth in all that it does, obtained by working everything, down to the most minute detail, from nature, and from nature only.[1] Every Pre-Raphaelite landscape background is painted to the last touch, in the open air, from the thing itself. Every Pre-Raphaelite figure, however studied in expression, is a true portrait of some living person. Every minute accessory is painted in the same manner. And one of the chief reasons for the violent opposition with which the school has been attacked by other artists, is the enormous cost of care and labour which such a system demands from those who adopt it, in contradistinction to the present slovenly and imperfect style.

This is the main Pre-Raphaelite principle. But the battle which its supporters have to fight is a hard one; and for that battle they have been fitted by a very peculiar character.

You perceive that the principal resistance they have to make is to that spurious beauty, whose attractiveness had tempted men to forget, or to despise, the more noble quality of sincerity: and in order at once to put them beyond the power of temptation from this beauty, they are, as a body, characterised by a total absence of sensibility to the ordinary and popular forms of artistic gracefulness; while, to all that still lower kind of prettiness, which regulates the disposition of our scenes upon the stage, and which appears in our lower art, as in our annuals, our common-place portraits,

[1] Or, where imagination is necessarily trusted to, by always endeavouring to conceive a fact as it really was likely to have happened, rather than as it most prettily *might* have happened. The various members of the school are not all equally severe in carrying out its principles, some of them trusting their memory or fancy very far; only all agreeing in the effort to make their memories so accurate as to seem like portraiture, and their fancy so probable as to seem like memory.

and statuary, the Pre-Raphaelites are not only dead, but they regard it with a contempt and aversion approaching to disgust. This character is absolutely necessary to them in the present time; but it, of course, occasionally renders their work comparatively unpleasing. As the school becomes less aggressive, and more authoritative,—which it will do,—they will enlist into their ranks men who will work, mainly, upon their principles, and yet embrace more of those characters which are generally attractive, and this great ground of offence will be removed.

Again: you observe that, as landscape painters, their principles must, in great part, confine them to mere foreground work; and singularly enough, that they may not be tempted away from this work, they have been born with comparatively little enjoyment of those evanescent effects and distant sublimities which nothing but the memory can arrest, and nothing but a daring conventionalism portray. But for this work they are not needed. Turner had done it before them; he, though his capacity embraced everything, and though he would sometimes, in his foregrounds, paint the spots upon a dead trout, and the dyes upon a butterfly's wing, yet for the most part delighting to begin at that very point where Pre-Raphaelitism becomes powerless.

Lastly. The habit of constantly carrying everything up to the utmost point of completion deadens the Pre-Raphaelites in general to the merits of men who, with an equal love of truth up to a certain point, yet express themselves habitually with speed and power, rather than with finish, and give abstracts of truth rather than total truth. Probably to the end of time artists will more or less be divided into these classes, and it will be impossible to make men like Millais understand the merits of men like Tintoret; but this is the more to be regretted because the Pre-Raphaelites have enormous powers of imagination, as well as of realisation, and do not yet themselves know of how much they would be capable, if they sometimes worked on a larger scale, and with a less laborious finish.

With all their faults, their pictures are, since Turner's death, the best—incomparably the best—on the walls of the Royal Academy; and such works as Mr. Hunt's Claudio and Isabella have never been rivalled, in some respects never approached, at any other period of art.

This I believe to be a most candid statement of all their faults and all their deficiencies; not such, you perceive, as are likely to arrest their progress. The "magna est veritas" was never more sure of accomplishment than by these men. Their adversaries have no chance with them. They will gradually unite their influence with whatever is true or powerful in the reactionary art of other countries; and on their works such a school will be founded as shall justify the third age of the world's civilisation, and render it as great in creation as it has been in discovery.

And now let me remind you but of one thing more. As you examine into the career of historical painting, you will be more and more struck with the fact I have this evening stated to you,—that none was ever truly great but that which represented the living forms and daily deeds of the people among whom it arose;—that all precious historical work records, not the past, but the present. Remember, therefore, that it is not so much in *buying* pictures, as in *being* pictures, that you can encourage a noble school. The best patronage of art is not that which seeks for the pleasures of sentiment in a vague ideality, nor for beauty of form in a marble image; but that which educates your children into living heroes, and binds down the flights and the fondnesses of the heart into practical duty and faithful devotion.

ADDENDA TO THE FOURTH LECTURE

I COULD not enter, in a popular lecture, upon one intricate and difficult question, closely connected with the subject of Pre-Raphaelitism—namely, the relation of invention to observation; and composition to imitation. It is still less a question to be discussed in the compass of a note; and I must defer all careful examination of it to a future opportunity. Nevertheless, it is impossible to leave altogether unanswered the first objection which is now most commonly made to the Pre-Raphaelite work, namely, that the principle of it seems adverse to all exertion of imaginative power. Indeed, such an objection sounds strangely on the lips of a public who have been in the habit of purchasing, for

hundreds of pounds, small squares of Dutch canvas, containing only servile imitations of the coarsest nature. It is strange that an imitation of a cow's head by Paul Potter, or of an old woman's by Ostade, or of a scene of tavern debauchery by Teniers, should be purchased and proclaimed for high art, while the rendering of the most noble expressions of human feeling in Hunt's Isabella, or of the loveliest English landscape, haunted by sorrow, in Millais' Ophelia, should be declared "puerile." But, strange though the utterance of it be, there is some weight in the objection. It is true that so long as the Pre-Raphaelites only paint from nature, however carefully selected and grouped, their pictures can never have the characters of the highest class of compositions. But, on the other hand, the shallow and conventional arrangements commonly called "compositions" by the artists of the present day, are infinitely farther from great art than the most patient work of the Pre-Raphaelites. That work is, even in its humblest form, a secure foundation, capable of infinite superstructure; a reality of true value, as far as it reaches, while the common artistical effects and groupings are a vain effort at superstructure without foundation—utter negation and fallacy from beginning to end. But more than this, the very faithfulness of the Pre-Raphaelites arises from the redundance of their imaginative power. Not only can all the members of the school compose a thousand times better than the men who pretend to look down upon them, but I question whether even the greatest men of old times possessed more exhaustless invention than either Millais or Rossetti; and it is partly the very ease with which they invent which leads them to despise invention. Men who have no imagination, but have learned merely to produce a spurious resemblance of its results by the recipes of composition, are apt to value themselves mightily on their concoctive science; but the man whose mind a thousand living imaginations haunt, every hour, is apt to care too little for them; and to long for the perfect truth which he finds is not to be come at so easily. And though I may perhaps hesitatingly admit that it is possible to love this truth of reality too intensely, yet I have no hesitation in declaring that there is *no hope* for those who despise it, and that the painter, whoever he be, who despises the pictures already produced by the

Pre-Raphaelites, has himself no capacity of becoming a great painter of any kind. Paul Veronese and Tintoret themselves, without desiring to imitate the Pre-Raphaelite work, would have looked upon it with deep respect, as John Bellini looked on that of Albert Durer; none but the ignorant could be unconscious of its truth, and none but the insincere regardless of it. How far it is possible for men educated on the severest Pre-Raphaelite principles to advance from their present style into that of the great schools of composition, I do not care to inquire, for at this period such an advance is certainly not desirable. Of great compositions we have enough, and more than enough, and it would be well for the world if it were willing to take some care of those it has. Of pure and manly truth, of stern statement of the things done and seen around us daily, we have hitherto had nothing. And in art, as in all other things, besides the literature of which it speaks, that sentence of Carlyle is inevitably and irreversibly true:—"Day after day, looking at the high destinies which yet await literature, which literature will ere long address herself with more decisiveness than ever to fulfil, it grows clearer to us that the proper task of literature lies in the domain of BELIEF, within which, poetic fiction, as it is charitably named, will have to take a quite new figure, if allowed a settlement there. Whereby were it not reasonable to prophecy that this exceeding great multitude of novel writers and such like, must, in a new generation, gradually do one of two things, either retire into nurseries, and work for children, minors, and semifatuous persons of both sexes, or else, what were far better, sweep their novel-fabric into the dust cart, and betake them, with such faculty as they have, *to understand and record what is true*, of which surely there is and for ever will be a whole infinitude unknown to us, of infinite importance to us. Poetry will more and more come to be understood as nothing but higher knowledge, and the only genuine Romance for grown persons, Reality."

As I was copying this sentence, a pamphlet was put into my hand, written by a clergyman, denouncing "Woe, woe, woe! to exceedingly young men of stubborn instincts, calling themselves Pre-Raphaelites."[1]

[1] Art, its Constitution and Capacities, &c. by the Rev. Edward Young, M.A. The phrase "exceedingly young men, of stubborn

I thank God that the Pre-Raphaelites *are* young, and that strength is still with them, and life, with all the war of it, still in front of them. Yet Everett Millais is this year of the exact age at which Raphael painted the Disputa, his greatest work; Rossetti and Hunt are both of them older still,—nor is there one member of the body so young as Giotto, when he was chosen from among the painters of Italy to decorate the Vatican. But Italy, in her great period, knew her great men, and did not "despise their youth." It is reserved for England to insult the strength of her noblest children—to wither their warm enthusiasm early into the bitterness of patient battle, and leave to those whom she should have cherished and aided, no hope but in resolution, no refuge but in disdain.

Indeed it is woeful, when the young usurp the place, or despise the wisdom, of the aged; and among the many dark signs of these times, the disobedience and insolence of youth are among the darkest. But with whom is the fault? Youth never yet lost its modesty where age had not lost its honour; nor did childhood ever refuse its reverence, except where age had forgotten correction. The cry, "Go up thou bald head," will never be heard in the land which remembers the precept, "See that ye despise not one of these little ones;" and although indeed youth *may* become despicable, when its eager hope is changed into presumption, and its progressive power into arrested pride, there is something more despicable still, in the old age which has learned neither judgment nor gentleness, which is weak without charity, and cold without discretion.

instincts," being twice quoted (carefully excluding the context) from my pamphlet on Pre-Raphaelitism.

NOTES ON SOME OF

THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES

EXHIBITED IN THE ROOMS OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY

No. I.—1855

WITH A SUPPLEMENT

PREFACE

I AM often asked by my friends to mark for them the pictures in the Exhibitions of the year which appear to me the most interesting, either in their good qualities, or their failure. I have determined, at last, to place the circular letter which on such occasions I am obliged to write, within reach of the general public. Twenty years of severe labour, devoted exclusively to the study of the principles of Art, have given me the right to speak on the subject with a measure of confidence; but it will be found that in the following pages, few statements are made on my own authority, and that I have limited myself to pointing out simple facts with respect to each picture, leaving to the reader the power of verifying such statements for himself. No criticism is of any value which does not enable the spectator, in his own person, to understand, or to detect, the alleged merit or unworthiness of the picture; and the true work of a critic is not to make his hearer believe him, but agree with him.

Whatever may be their abstract truth, the following remarks have at least in them the virtue of *entire* impartiality. Among the painters whose works are spoken of, the greater number are absolutely unknown to me; some are my friends; and some quite other than friends. But the reader would be strangely deceived who, from the tone of the criticism, should endeavour to guess to which class the painter belonged. It might, indeed, be alleged, that there is some unfairness in fastening on the faults of one or two works, not grosser in error than many around them; but it would have been tedious to expose all the fallacies in the Academy, and I believe it will be found, besides, that the notice of the particular picture is nearly always justified, if not by excess of demerit, at least by excess of pretension.

I have been hindered, by unforeseen pressure of work, from noticing, this year, any but pictures in the Academy; and have perhaps missed several there which ought to have been favourably distinguished; but I hope henceforward, to

furnish, every year, in the same form, some notes on the leading pictures in all the Exhibitions, which may be of use in guiding the public to the discernment and acceptance of those unobtrusive truths of which our modern Idealism has so long repressed the pursuit, and withheld the appreciation.

May 29th, 1855.

NOTES

&c.

35. Flowers. (*Miss A. F. Mutrie.*)

There are two other works by this artist in the rooms, Nos. 304 and 306. It would be well to examine them at once in succession, lest they should afterwards be passed carelessly when the mind has been interested by pictures of higher aim; for all these flower paintings are remarkable for very lovely, pure, and yet unobtrusive colour—perfectly tender, and yet luscious—(note the purple rose leaves especially), and a richness of petal texture that seems absolutely scented. The arrangement is always graceful—the backgrounds sometimes too faint. I wish this very accomplished artist would paint some banks of flowers in wild country, just as they grow, as she appears slightly in danger of falling into too artificial methods of grouping.

68. El Paseo, the property of Her Majesty the Queen. (*J. Phillip.*)

76. Mrs. Coleridge. (*W. Boxall.*)

The juxtaposition of these two pictures looks very like deliberate malice; but it may read an excellent lesson to the two artists. Mr. Phillip's fault is excess of decision and force; Mr. Boxall's, excess of delicacy and tenderness. Mr. Phillip's work, by the contrast, has become vulgar, and Mr. Boxall's, evanescent.

Looked at separately, there is much merit in both paintings; but the truth, so painfully brought out, is still a truth with respect to both. Mr. Phillip has much to subdue, and much to refine, before he will be able to represent not merely the piquancy, but the wayward, half melancholy mystery of Spanish beauty; and Mr. Boxall has much to complete, much to *de*fine, before he can hope that his graceful idea of the English lady will be in anywise justly expressed. The same may be said of all his works in this exhibition. Refined in expression, though in some cases looking too stiffly straightforward, the faces he paints are still little more than shadows—the reflection of the truth in

a cloudy mirror. The dresses are even less than this; in fact nothing more than a filling of the canvas with vague sweeps of the brush, issuing, when there is any momentary distinctness, in pure fallacy; as in the portrait before us, where the shadow of the chain on the neck, which, to accord with the faintness of the rest of the drawing, should have been so tender as hardly to be perceived, is nearly as black as the chain itself—and this equally on the flesh tint, and on the white dress!

Mr. Boxall will never satisfy himself, nor do his real talents justice, until he is content to paint, unaffectedly, as far as he is able, things as they are. It is not time nor labour that is wanting: there are as many touches on this ghostly gown as there are on one of Velasquez's portraits, head and all, which looks living enough to stalk the next moment into the middle of the room.

77. Colin. (*J. C. Hook, A.*)

There is a sweet feeling in this choice of landscape subject, as in most of the other works of this painter. The execution is flimsy and imperfect, and must be much bettered before his pictures can rank as works of any importance. He has, however, a very interesting figure-subject in the middle room, of which more in its place.

78. The Wrestling in "As you Like It." (*D. Maclise, R.A.*)

Very bad pictures may be divided into two principal classes—those which are weakly or passively bad, and which are to be pitied and passed by; and those which are energetically or actively bad, and which demand severe reprobation, as wilful transgressions of the laws of all good art. The picture before us is of the last class. Mr. Maclise has keen sight, a steady hand, good anatomical knowledge of the human form, and good experience of the ways of the world. If he draws ill, or imagines ungracefully, it is because he is resolved to do so. He has seen enough of society to know how a Duke generally sits—how a young lady generally looks at a strange youth who interests her; and it is by vulgar choice, not vulgar ignorance, that he makes the enthroned Duke straddle like a village actor, and the young lady express her interest by a cool, unrestrained, and steady stare. It is not worth while to analyse the picture thoroughly, but let us glance at the two opponent

figures—Charles and Orlando. The spectator can certainly see nothing in this "Charles" but a grim, sinister, sinewy monster, wholly devoid of all gentleness or humanity. Was Shakespeare's Charles such an one? So far from it, that into his mouth is put the first description of the love of Rosalind and Celia—"The Duke's daughter, her cousin, so loves her, being ever from their cradles bred together, that she would have followed her exile, or have died to stay behind her—never two ladies loved as they do." So far from it, that he comes to Oliver especially to warn him against allowing his brother to wrestle with him. "Your brother is but young and tender; for your love, I would be loath to foil him." Then, on Oliver's execrable slander of Orlando, poor honest Charles is "heartily glad I came hither; if he come to-morrow, I'll give him his payment;" this being not in cruelty, but in honest indignation at Orlando's ascribed villainy; nevertheless, when the trial comes, although flushed with victory, and haughty in his supposed strength, there is no bitterness in his question—"Where is this young gallant?" Poor Charles is as much slandered here by the painter as Orlando was by his brother. Well, but what of Orlando himself? He folds his hands, and turns up his eyes like a lover in his last appeal to his lady's mercy. What was the actual fact? Orlando had been but that instant called before the princesses; he had never seen them before in his life. He is a man of firm, calm, and gloomy character—the sadness having been induced by injustice; he has no hope, no thought of Rosalind or her love, at this moment; he has challenged the wrestler in quiet resolve to try with him the strength of his youth—little caring what comes of it. He answers the princesses with deep and grateful courtesy, but with a despairing carelessness of his fate—"If I be foiled, there is but one shamed that was never gracious; if killed, but one dead that is willing to be so. I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me—the world no injury, for in it I have nothing." Imagine the calmness and steady melancholy of the man who would speak thus, and then compare the sentimental grimace (as of a fashionable tenor in a favourite aria) of the Orlando in the picture.

Next to pass from imagination of character to realisation of detail. Mr. Maclise is supposed to draw well, and realise

minute features accurately. Now, the fact is, that this work has every fault usually attributed to the pre-Raphaelites, without one of their excellences. The details are all so sharp and hard that the patterns on the dresses force the eye away from the faces; and the leaves on the boughs call to us to count them. But not only are they all drawn distinctly, they are all drawn *wrong*.

Take a single instance in a simple thing. On the part of the hem of the Duke's robe, which crosses his right leg, are seven circular golden ornaments, and two halves, Mr. Maclise being evidently unable to draw them as *turning* away *round* the side of the dress. Now observe, wherever there is a depression or fold in the dress, those circles ought to contract into narrow upright ovals. There *is* such a depression at the first next the half one on the left, and that circle ought to have become narrowed. Instead of which it actually widens itself! The second is right. Then the third, reaching the turn to the shade, and all those beyond it, ought to have been in narrowed perspective—but they all remain full circles! And so throughout the ornament. Imagine the errors which a draughtsman who could make such a childish mistake as this must commit in matters that really need refined drawing, turns of leaves, and so on!

But to pass from drawing to light and shade. Observe, the light falls from the left, on all the figures, but that of the two on the extreme left. These two, for the sake of effect, are in "accidental shadow." Good; but why then has Oliver, in the brown, a sharp light on the left side of his nose! and on his brown mantle? Reflected lights, says the apologist. From what? Not from the red Charles, who is five paces at least in advance of Oliver; and if from the golden dress of the courtier, how comes it that the nearer and brighter golden dress of the Duke casts *no reflected light* whatever on the yellow furs and red hose of the wrestler, infinitely more susceptible of such a reflex than the dress of Oliver?

It would be perfectly easy to analyse the whole picture in this manner; but I pass to a pleasanter subject of examination.

90. An Armenian Lady. (*J. F. Lewis.*)

It is very instructive to pass immediately from Maclise's

work to this. Both propose the complete rendering of details; but with Maclise all is inherently wrong; here everything is exquisitely, ineffably right. I say *ineffably*—for no words are strong enough to express the admirable skill and tenderness of pencilling and perception shown in this picture. It is one of the first that I have seen by this master in oil, and I am rejoiced to find it quite equal in precision and purity to his best work in water colour, while it is in a safer medium. The delicacy of the drawing of the palm in the distance—of the undulating perspective of the zigzags on the dress, and of the deep and fanciful local colouring of the vase, are all equally admirable. The face —infinitely laboured—fails slightly. The flesh tint is too blue—a fault into which the master has lately fallen from trying to reach impossible delicacy.

It is only to be regretted that this costly labour should be spent on a subject devoid of interest.

94. The River's Bank. (*T. Creswick, R.A.*)

This, like most other of the landscapes hung on the line, is one of those works so characteristic of the English school, and so little creditable to them, in which everything is carelessly or ill painted—because it is in a landscape. Nothing is really *done*. The cows have imperfect horns and hides; the girl has an imperfect face, and imperfect hands; the trees have imperfect leaves; the sky imperfect clouds; the water imperfect waves. The colour, of a heavy yellow with dim green, is worse than imperfect; for colour must either be right—that is, infinitely beautiful; or wrong —that is, *less* than beautiful. All tame and dead colour is *false* colour.

120. Beatrice. (*C. L. Eastlake, P.R.A.*)

An imitation of the Venetians, on the supposition that the essence of Venetian painting consisted in method: Issuing, as trusts in Method instead of Fact always must issue,—in mere negation. Sir Charles Eastlake has power of rendering expression, if he would watch it in human beings—and power of drawing form, if he would look at the form to be drawn. But when, because Giorgione and Titian draw broadly, and sometimes make their colours look broken, he supposes that all he has to do is to get a broken breadth; he ends, as all imitators must end, in a rich inheritance of the errors of his original, without its

virtues. Titian and Giorgione have a slight tendency to flatness; but Giorgione's G Flat has accompaniments, Sir Charles's C Flat stands alone.

The real source of the error may be sufficiently seen in the distance; Titian paints his distances in pure colour—but at least indicates what is grass and what is stone. The distant ground, here, with its white spot for a castle, is a mere space of dim brownish-green paint, which can by no possibility stand for grass, or moss, or any other natural thing. It seems to me, however, that there are some points in the execution of the picture, considered as an example of certain textures, which are instructive. The whole is careful, and the draperies well cast. But who is the lady? Dante's Beatrice, or Benedict's? She can hardly be either: her face indicates little piety, and less wit.

121. Flitting Shadows. (*H. Jutsum.*)

Not particularly remarkable; but good as an instance of tolerably clear and firm drawing. The clouds and ferns are both exceedingly well articulated.

136. "Come, Rest in this Bosom," &c. (*A. Egg.*)

Mr. Egg has considerable power of expression, and though this subject of prison sentiment is both painful, useless, and hacknied, he appears to have something like serious purpose in his work. But he will never be a great painter until he has a greater respect for plain truth. There is in this picture one of the most wonderful fallacies that ever painter ventured. Observe the shadows of the bars of the window. They fall with intense sharpness on the wall at the back of the bed. Now, to get there, the sun must have come *in* at the window; it did not get through the keyhole. And as it came in at the window, it must have cast the first portions of those shadows *from the ends of the bars themselves*. But, actually, at the bars there are no shadows at all! It is dim daylight, shadowless, at the window itself. Hot sunshine, ten feet within the prison! The state of mind in which a painter could firmly carry out such a fallacy is wholly adverse to all real progress.

It is better to walk at once into the next room, in order to examine the more important work by this artist, "The Life and Death of Buckingham," No. 349. The story is worth telling, and there is vigorous painting in both pictures; but the figures which surround Buckingham in his riot are not

of the class which could have entertained a man either of wit or breeding. Vice, unhappily, is not always repulsive at first sight, and the Tempter has not usually his bargain quite so cheap as he would have had of the Duke on such terms. The head of the dying Buckingham is forcible, but quite unfinished.

141. The Mitherless Bairn. (*T. Faed.*)

The story is well told, and the figure of the orphan child very affecting. But the painting is throughout the most common-place Wilkieism—white spots everywhere. I expected far higher things from this painter, whose work eight years ago was more modest and powerful than it is now.

142. Dutch Boats. (*C. Stanfield, R.A.*)

A fair example of Stanfield; but I never understand, in the accepted types of marine painting, why there is no distinction between the Foam and the Water. In the sea there is either yeasty foam or smooth surface; but in all marine paintings the waves are merely touched upon with little oblong strokes of white, which express neither water nor spray. Observe those in this picture at the boat's bow.

149. Lear Recovering his Reason at the Sight of Cordelia. (*J. R. Herbert, R.A.*)

As No. 78 furnished us with an instance of the class of picture which is Actively bad, we have here an equally important instance of the Passively bad; which, had it been in a less prominent place, might kindly have been passed without notice; but, since it is thus recommended to the public by its position, it must needs be examined.

In the whole compass of Shakespeare's conceptions, the two women whom he has gifted with the deepest souls are Cordelia and Virgilia. All his other women can speak what is in them. These two cannot. The "Nothing, my lord," of Cordelia, and the "gracious silence" of Virgilia, are the everlasting seals set by the Master of the human heart upon the most sacred writing of its folded and golden leaves. Shakespeare himself could not find words to tell what was in these women. And now, cast down at her father's feet, the alabaster vase is broken—the house of life is filled with the odour of the ointment—all Cordelia is poured forth in that infinite "I am" of fulfilled love.[1]

[1] "I think this lady
To be my child, Cordelia.
Cordelia. And so I am; *I am.*"

Do but think of it for one quiet instant. Think of the rejected creature, so long disallowed from daughter's word and act; unsistered also—all her sisterhood changed into pale flame of indignation—now at last, in consummation of all sorrow, and pity, and shame, and thankfulness, and horror, and hope long delayed, watching the veil grow thin that in those eyes, wasted with grief, was still drawn between her father's soul and hers. Think of it! As for imagining it—perhaps Dante might have imagined it, with the winds of paradise yet upon his brow. As for painting it——

And yet, in the midst of the Royal Academy Rooms of England, and in the midst of the nineteenth century, that profile of firwood, painted buff, with a white spot in the corner of the eye, does verily profess to be a painting of it.

It is a thing not a little to be pondered upon, that the men who attempt these highest things are always those who cannot even do the least things well. Around the brow of this firwood figure there is a coronet, and in the coronet four jewels. I thought that, according to Royal Academy principles, in a "High Art" picture, this Rundell and Bridge portion of it should have been a little less conspicuous. However, as we find these unideal emeralds and rubies thus condescendingly touched, let us see *how* they are touched. Each stone has a white spot, or high light, upon it. Now, that flash is always the reflection of the highest light to which the jewel is turned; and here, in a tent, it must be of an opening in the tent on the left-hand side. Now, as the jewels are set round the brow, each in a different position, each would reflect this tent door from a different spot of its surface. This change in the position of the reflection would be one of the principal means by which nature would indicate the curve of the coronet. Now, look at the painting. Every gem has actually the high light in the same spot, on the left-hand side, all round the brow!

The dimness of pictorial capacity indicated by such a blunder as this, is very marvellous. For a painter of the slightest power, even though he had not drawn the gems from nature, would infallibly have varied the flash, for his own pleasure, and in an instinctive fulfilment of the eternal law of change.

It is nevertheless a fact that, although from some peculiar

idiosyncrasy not comprehending the passage in King Lear, Mr. Herbert has feeling; and if he would limit his work to subjects of the more symbolic and quietly religious class, which truly move him, and would consider himself by no means a great master, but a very incipient student, and paint everything from the fact and life, faithfully, he would be able to produce works of some value.

159. Sir Robert Harry Inglis. (*G. Richmond.*)

A very interesting portrait of a good man by a good painter. The attitude, as characteristic of Sir Robert, is admirably chosen; but the face, though it has all the gentleness, has hardly the vivacity, of Sir Robert's look of welcome. The chief fault of this portrait is the mistiness of the accessories on the right hand. I am sorry to see Mr. Richmond countenancing the false, though of late Parliamentary, persuasion, that every statesman's proper element is Fog; and it was a poor compliment, both to Sir Robert Inglis and to himself, to suppose that the portrait would not be sufficiently interesting, unless he subdued the collateral interest of the joint-stool.

161. Royal Prisoners. 1650. (*C. W. Cope, R.A.*)

A very beautiful and well-chosen subject, not ill painted. The spectator will see it to better advantage, if with his hand he will hide the guard's helmet, which projects into the light like the beak of a canoe, and appears, for a moment, to be the principal subject.

181. Christabel. (*W. Dyce, R.A.*)

An example of one of the false branches of Pre-Raphaelitism, consisting in imitation of the old religious masters. This head is founded chiefly on reminiscence of Sandro Botticelli. The ivy leaves at the side are as elaborate as in the true school, but are quite false both in colour and shade. There is some sweet expression in the face.

199. A Church Door. (*J. D. Luard.*)

A faithful little study, very refreshing among the artificialnesses with which it is surrounded.

201. Penserosa. (*C. W. Cope, R.A.*)

The young lady appears to be reading, may possibly be thinking, is certainly passing under a Norman arch, and is very pretty. This *ensemble* is interesting, but had better have been put into the architectural room, as it

may materially promote the erection of Norman arches in the gardens of the metropolis, for the better performance of pensive appearances to morning visitors.

228. In Betchworth Park. (*W. F. Witherington, R.A.*)

240. The Bird Keeper. (*R. Redgrave, R.A.*)

We have here two interesting examples of another fallacious condition of landscape—that which pretends to pre-Raphaelite distinctness of detail; but is in all detail, industriously wrong. In Creswick's work the touches represent nothing; here they represent perpetual error, assuming that all leaves of trees may be represented by oval, sharp-pointed touches of yellow or green,—as if leaves had not their perspectives, shadows, and changes of hue, like everything else! There is great appearance of fidelity to nature in these works, but there is none in reality; they are mere mechanical accumulations of similar touches, as a sempstress mechanically accumulates similar stitches. If the spectator desires to know the difference between right and wrong in this matter, let him first examine Mr. Witherington's oval touches, and then cross the room to No. 321, in which the flowers in the window are truly and properly painted, and look at the way the leaves are set and worked there; and if it be supposed that this is only to be done in a cabinet picture, the question is well worth settling at once by merely walking out of the Academy into the National Gallery next door, and looking at the leaves which crown the Bacchus, and the little dancing faun, in Titian's "Bacchus and Ariadne," in which every turn of the most subtle perspective, and every gradation of colour, is given with the colossal ease and power of the consummate master. Examine further, the vine-leaves above on the right, and the flowers in the foreground, and you will return to the Academy with an eye so instructed, as hardly thenceforward to accept, in such matters, fallacies for facts.

239. The Broken Window. (*W. H. Knight.*)

This picture does not catch the eye at a distance, but, on looking close, there will be found exquisite and careful painting in it. The fish on the tray on the boy's head are amongst the best bits of cabinet painting in the room.

244. The Moorland. (*J. W. Inchbold.*)

This is, as far as I have seen, the only thoroughly good landscape in the rooms of the Academy. It is more

exquisite in its finish of lichenous rock painting than any work I have ever seen. Its colour, throughout, is as forcible as it is subtle and refined; and although it appears as yet to display little power of invention, the appreciation of truth in it is so intense, that a single inch of it is well worth all the rest of the landscapes in the room. It may well be supposed that my knowledge of this picture was not obtained by study of it in its present position. Those who happen to be interested in the system of hanging now pursued in the Academy, will do well to verify my statement by an examination of the picture after the Exhibition closes.

There are two other works by this artist, in the outer rooms; 1075., ineffective, but yet full of excellent work and right feeling; and 1162., exceedingly beautiful.

282. The Rescue. (*J. E. Millais, A.*)

It is the only *great* picture exhibited this year; but this is *very* great. The immortal element is in it to the full. It is easily understood, and the public very generally understand it. Various small cavils have been made at it, chiefly by conventionalists, who never ask how the thing is, but fancy for themselves how it ought to be. I have heard it said, for instance, that the fireman's arm should not have looked so black in the red light. If people would only try the experiment, they would find that near black, compared with other colours, is always black. Coals do not look red in a fire, but where they are red hot. In fact, the contrast between any dark colour and a light one, is always nearly the same, however high we raise the light that falls on both. Paul Veronese often paints local colour darker in the lights than in the shadow, generally equal in both. The glow that is mixed with the blackness is here intensely strong; but, justly, does not destroy the nature of the blackness.

The execution of the picture is remarkably bold—in some respects imperfect. I have heard it was hastily finished; but, except in the face of the child kissing the mother, it could not be much bettered. For there is a true sympathy between the impetuousness of execution and the haste of the action.

305. At the Opera. (*W. P. Frith, R.A.*)

There is great cleverness and successful realisation, up to a certain point, in this picture, the work being very thoroughly done, as far as the painter sees what *is* to be done, and all

very skilfully handled, down to the utmost seam of the white kid gloves. It is not a kind of painting which will ever bring great fame, or deserve it; but it is better than spurious "High Art."

321. The Writing Lesson. (*J. Collinson.*)

This is a very careful and beautiful study—the subject not interesting enough to render the picture attractive; but it is a good piece of work throughout, and there are not many pictures in the room of which this can be said.

355. A Contrast. (*A. Solomon.*)

It is difficult to see this picture at the height at which it is placed, but it seems to me better than most of its class in the rooms; and the face of the invalid is very beautiful.

357. Scottish Presbyterians. (*J. Stirling.*)

A very noticeable picture, showing careful study, and good discrimination of expression. But the painter cannot yet do all he wants to do; he should try to work more delicately, and not attempt so much at once.

471. Fowl and Pigeons. (*W. Huggins.*)

There is excellent painting in pieces of this study; but as a whole it is incomplete, the background being wrong, and the parts out of harmony. The painter ought to work with the sternest self-denial, from corner to corner of his picture, completing everything from nature, near or distant, to the best of his power.

486. The Mother of Moses. (*J. C. Hook, A.*)

I alluded to this picture in noticing the landscape works by the same artist. This is very truly and thoughtfully conceived. It is interesting to consider how many "findings of Moses" have been painted, not one of which ever attempted to express this, the deepest note of passion in all the scene. The princess and her maidens pleasantly surprised at finding a child among the reeds! this was all that the so-called great masters ever dreamed of. The modern painter is to be deeply thanked for his true and earnest thought; above all for the little Miriam, trotting by her mother's side with her rough harp, and pitcher hung by it, looking back, in her childish wisdom and fear, to see that the princess is not watching the burst of passion which might betray her mother.

545. St. Sebastian. (*C. Stanfield, R.A.*)

A careful and good example of Stanfield's work. But

persons who accuse the Pre-Raphaelites of faults in aerial perspective, may perhaps be able to account, better than I can, for the fact that the foreground and the hill three miles off, are precisely of the same colour.

569. Cimabue's Madonna carried in Procession through the Streets of Florence. (*F. Leighton.*)

This is a very important and very beautiful picture. It has both sincerity and grace, and is painted on the purest principles of Venetian art—that is to say, on the calm acceptance of the whole of nature, small and great, as, in its place, deserving of faithful rendering. The great secret of the Venetians was their simplicity. They were great colourists, not because they had peculiar secrets about oil and colour, but because when they saw a thing red, they painted it red; and when they saw it blue, they painted it blue; and when they saw it distinctly, they painted it distinctly. In all Paul Veronese's pictures, the lace borders of the table-cloths or fringes of the dresses are painted with just as much care as the faces of the principal figures; and the reader may rest assured that in all great art it is so. Everything in it is done as well as it *can* be done. Thus, in the picture before us, in the background is the Church of San Miniato, strictly accurate in every detail; on the top of the wall are oleanders and pinks, as carefully painted as the church; the architecture of the shrine on the wall is well studied from thirteenth-century Gothic, and painted with as much care as the pinks; the dresses of the figures, very beautifully designed, are painted with as much care as the architecture; and the faces with as much care as the dresses: that is to say, all things, throughout, with as much care as the painter could bestow. It necessarily follows, that what is most difficult (*i. e.*, the faces) should be comparatively the worst done. But if they are done as well as the painter could do them, it is all we have to ask; and modern artists are under a wonderful mistake in thinking that when they have painted faces ill, they make their picture more valuable by painting the dresses worse.

The painting before us has been objected to, because it seems broken up into bits. Precisely the same objection would hold, and in very nearly the same degree, against the best works of the Venetians. All faithful colourists' work,

in figure-painting, has a look of sharp separation between part and part. I will not detain the reader by explaining *why* this is so, but he may convince himself of the fact by one walk through the Louvre, comparing the Venetian pictures in this respect with those of all other schools. Although, however, in common with all other works of its class, it is marked by these sharp divisions, there is no confusion in its arrangement. The principal figure is nobly principal, not by extraordinary light, but by its own pure whiteness; and both the master and the young Giotto attract full regard by distinction of form and face. The features of the boy are carefully studied, and are indeed what, from the existing portraits of him, we know those of Giotto must have been in his youth. The head of the young girl who wears the garland of blue flowers is also very sweetly conceived.

Such are the chief merits of the picture. Its defect is, that the equal care given to the whole of it, is not yet *care enough*. I am aware of no instance of a young painter, who was to be really great, who did not in his youth paint with intense effort and delicacy of finish. The handling here is much too broad; and the faces are, in many instances, out of drawing, and very opaque and feeble in colour. Nor have they, in general, the dignity of the countenance of the thirteenth century. The Dante especially is ill-conceived—far too haughty, and in no wise noble or thoughtful. It seems to me probable that Mr. Leighton has greatness in him, but there is no absolute proof of it in this picture; and if he does not, in succeeding years, paint far better, he will soon lose his power of painting so well.

594. Rome. (*D. Roberts, R.A.*)

This is a large architectural diagram, with the outlines executed sharply in black, the upper half being then painted brick-red, and the lower green-grey. (Note the distinctness of the mannerism in the *outlined* statues and pillars of the chapel in shade upon the right.) I can hardly understand how any man, devoting his time to painting, ever comes to suppose that a picture can be right which is painted in two colours! or by what reasoning he persuades himself that, because seen under the red light of sunset, the purple trunk of a stone pine, the white stucco of house walls, the scarlet of tiles, and the green of foliage, may all be of the same

colour. Imagine a painting of a beautiful blue-eyed female face, by sunset, which represented its blue eyes, its nose, its cheeks, and its lips, all of the same brick-red!

Mr. Roberts was once in the habit of painting carefully finished cabinet pictures, which were well composed (in the common sense), and fairly executed in the details. Had he continued these, painting more and more, instead of less and less, from nature, he might by this time have been a serviceable painter. Is it altogether too late to warn him that he is fast becoming nothing more than an Academician?

686. Trout Stream in Wales. (*J. Dearle.*)

Mr. Dearle's painting, considered as mere laying of colour, is perhaps better than that of any of the landscapists whose works are low enough to be visible, but his drawing of foliage is mannered and false. These trees are far more like moss than trees. He appears also to be confining himself to one kind of scene—an indolent habit, which can end in nothing but mediocrity. His river scene last year was good, for once; a duplicate of it is too much.

1334. The Good Harvest. (*C. A. Collins.*)

There is much careful painting in this little study, and it was a wicked thing to put it into a room in which, while its modest subject could draw no attention, its good painting was of necessity utterly invisible.

1359. Dressing for the First Party. (*A. C. Chisholme.*)

A very spirited picture, the best in execution (of its school) in the rooms.

1405. The "London Gazette" 1854. (*F. B. Barwell.*)

The Academy is of course filled with pictures of this kind of subject. This is, I think the most earnest. It seems to be the only one which takes grief out of the drawing-room, and conceives it as independent of miniatures by Sir William Ross.

There are several other pictures in the rooms respecting which I should have been glad to say a few words; but I have no time to pursue the subject further, and must here leave the reader to his own investigations, only expressing my regret that absence from London prevents, for the present, my seeing a picture, of which a friend, in whose

judgment I have great confidence, speaks with unusual enthusiasm,—No. 514, "Early Spring Evening" (W. Davis). My friend says it contains the "unity of perfect truth with invention." I cannot answer for its doing this, which would place it in the first rank of works of art; but, as it is hung in a place where it is not easily caught sight of, I have little doubt it must be a work of merit.

Some surprise has been expressed to me by friends at the small number of pictures marked in the preceding Notes, as if, in passing by the others, I had intended to convey an impression of their being beneath criticism. I do not think that of all the pictures on the walls there are more than six or seven beneath criticism; but I do think that those which above are mentioned with praise are, on the whole, the best in the rooms, and that those which are blamed are fair examples of the worst: one or two omissions, made accidentally, in a somewhat hurried review, it is better, perhaps, thus late, than in nowise, to repair.

Of these the only one I seriously regretted was of the "Elgiva," by Miss J. M. Boyce (No. 1295). The expression in this head is so subtle, and so tenderly wrought, that at first the picture might easily be passed as hard or cold; but it could only so be passed, as Elgiva herself might have been sometimes seen,—by a stranger—without penetration of her sorrow. As we watch the face for a little time, the slight arch of the lip seems to begin to quiver, and the eyes fill with ineffable sadness and on-look of despair. The dignity of all the treatment—the beautiful imagination of faint but pure colour, place this picture, to my mind, among those of the very highest power and promise. Complete achievement there is not in it as yet, chiefly because the colours, quite exquisitely conceived and arranged, are not each in their own separate quality perfect, in the sense in which any given colour by Bonifazio or Giorgione is perfect; but if this artist, looking always to nature and her own thoughts for the thing to be expressed, will strive to express them, with some memory of the great Venetians in her treatment of each separate hue, it seems to me that she might entertain the hope of taking place in the very first rank of painters.

Two pictures I passed intentionally without remark, not

because they were unimportant, but because they seemed to me to unite good and bad qualities in a manner so curiously entangled, that no short criticism could clearly separate the one from the other—I mean Mr. Dobson's "Alms'-deeds of Dorcas" (379), and Mr. Sant's "Eda" (638). Of these the first has certainly some high qualities, but seems to me singularly wanting in pictorial delightfulness: it looks like the work of a man of good feeling, and considerable industry, who had been forced to learn to paint against his will, and did it in many respects well, but without pleasure. The second, "Eda," shows, as do all Mr. Sant's works, very high pictorial power, more or less lost in the cold conventionality of modern colour, or non-colour. Surely Mr. Sant must admire Reynolds! why does he not aim at Reynolds's pitch and character of hue? Very certainly he admires children,—does he really think that this pretty little lady's cheeks have as much of the peach, and as little of the mortal clay, in them, as he sees in the sunned cheek of living childhood? There is much throughout this picture to be admired, but also much to be regretted; and I cannot, without too long detention of the reader, accurately mark the gradations of respect or regret.

In the work commended to me by my friend—Mr. Davis's "Spring Evening" (514)—I am disappointed.

It is unfair to judge of it in its present position, but it appears to me merely good pre-Raphaelite work, certainly showing no evidence whatever of inventive power, and perhaps less tact than usual in choice of subject; but it is assuredly superior to any of the landscapes hung on the line.

There are also many promising and meritorious studies of landscape, such as Mr. Dearmer's "Magpie Island" (665), scattered about the rooms, in positions variously inconspicuous; but these I do not particularly name, as until a picture possesses some qualities of *colour*, it is not, in the proper sense, a picture at all; and studies of simple green effects are to be considered merely as materials for future work of higher order. Many of these studies, however, would have won some admiration and sympathy for the young artists, if they had been placed where they could have been in anywise justly seen; and in reprobation of the treatment they have for the most part received, it would be

well to remember,—glancing once more at Mr. Leighton's picture of Giotto and Cimabue,—those noble lines of Mrs. Browning, in "Casa Guidi Windows," beginning—

> "I hold, too,
> That Cimabue smiled upon the lad
> At the first stroke which passed what *he* could do;
> Or else his Virgin's smile had never had
> Such sweetness in't."

And now in conclusion, I have only to notice and answer an attempted defence, by one of the daily papers, of some of the pictures blamed in the above Notes. It is not indeed my usual practice to read, still less to answer, the remarks of journalists on what I write. Their public duty compels them to criticise at an hour's notice what I have taken years to consider; and it cannot be a matter of wonder that, under such circumstances, they should often misunderstand, and sometimes misrepresent me. The error and the distortion may in general be left to the correction of time; but as these Notes are intended expressly for the use of readers who have little time to spare, I will meet with as much reply as may be necessary every endeavour on the part of the journalists to invalidate their authority. Hitherto I have noticed but one effort of the kind, namely, that in the *Globe* of the 18th of June.

It is above said of Mr. Roberts's picture, that the reasoning must be strange which persuaded its artist "that because seen under the red light of sunset, the purple trunk of a stone pine, and the white stucco of house walls—the scarlet of tiles, and the green of foliage might all be of the same colour."

The *Globe* replies:—That in "Modern Painters" I said,—"local colour, changeful and uncertain in itself, is again disguised and modified by the hue of the light." I did so. I said much more than this. If the writer had searched a little further, he might have found the following passage, infinitely more to his purpose: "I have seen the pale fresh green of spring vegetation in the gardens of Venice turned pure russet, or between that and crimson, by a vivid sunset of this kind, every *particle of green colour being absolutely annihilated*." I said this, and said it most truly; but I never said that the leaves were, under such circumstances, *of the same colour as the trunks*, or as the palace tiles, or as

the house walls. The light which will turn green to brownish russet, turns blue to purple, white to pale rose, scarlet to a burning flame-colour, far above all possible imitation, and brown to scarlet,—every colour retaining its due relation, in paleness or darkness, to every other; while all the shadows, down to the minutest angle of a stone, retaining the local colours unaltered by the light, and doubly brought out by opposition, fill the intervals and interstices of the warm effect with the most marvellous pieces of the purest blue, green, or grey. A thousand different hues ought to have been seen in every inch of that glowing light, before it could have been right; and the notable misfortune of the picture is, that where there *is* the slightest variation, it is always on the wrong side. Thus, in the principal tower on the right, the tiles, which were naturally red, and ought now to have been of intensest vermilion, are actually, though a little darker, less *red* than the wall below; and the paler buildings (Castle of St. Angelo, etc.), beyond the river, are less affected by the red light than the sprays of the stone pine! while the reflection in the river—which the writer in the *Globe* instances as an introduction of a third colour—is the broadest fallacy in the whole work: it is brighter than the sky above it, instead of being, as a reflection always is, a little darker; and what makes the matter worse is, that the river, seen from above in that position, could not have reflected the pale sky at the horizon at all, but only the dark sky some distance above.

I deeply regret having been forced to speak again of this picture, because (so much of private feeling it may be permitted me to confess) I have great personal regard for Mr. Roberts; but it may be well to state at once, that whenever I blame a painting, I do so as gently as is consistent with just explanation of its *principal* defects. I never say half of what I could say in its disfavour; and it will hereafter be found, that when once I have felt it my duty to attack a picture, the worst policy which the friends of the artist can possibly adopt will be to defend it.

The next passage which the *Globe* endeavours to invalidate is that in which I said, respecting "The Rescue,"—"The contrast between any dark colour and a light one is always nearly the same, however high we raise the light that falls on *both*;" against which the *Globe* quotes my statement

in "Modern Painters:"—"Light and shade so completely conquer the distinctions of local colour, that the difference of hue between the illumined parts of a white and black object is not so great as the difference, in sunshine, between the illumined and dark side of either separately."

Will the writer for the *Globe* be so good as to point out the contradiction? This last passage, indeed, says:—"Light and *shade* conquer distinctions of local colour." It does not say that *light* alone does. In the first passage I say: "Raise white a certain height, and raise black as far, and still they are at the same distance from each other; or, in other terms, raise 6 to 12, and 0 to 6, and they are still 6 apart." In the second passage I say: "That this difference, whatever it may at any moment be, is not so great as the difference between the full light and full shadow of a given colour in sunshine."

Of course this does not mean dim sunshine, or that dark sides may not by reflected light become nearly as bright as light sides; but it expresses, in few words, this most important and stern fact, that, while the resources of art always easily equal the most violent distinctions of local colours or patterns, they are utterly inadequate to express the depths of gradation between full sunshine and full shadow in any given colour—so that Albert Durer, and all the great masters of form, are compelled to leave all local colour as pure *white*, in order to get the gradations between it and the shadow. In Albert Durer's best plate, the "Adam and Eve",—highly finished as it is,—the green leaves are represented as pure white, in order to get them even approximately raised above the shadow; and even then, half of the intermediate gradations are missed.

The great colourists always chose, of course, to give the other side of the scale of truth. They gave the local colours truly, and sank or subdued the gradations of shadow—Veronese giving the type of the perfect statement of local colour, Tintoret striking the exact balance between him and the Chiaroscurists, and Rembrandt representing as much as was possible of the truth of the opposite scale.

Millais is a great colourist, and, of course, works on the principles of the colourists. The question respecting his picture, is one respecting the distinctions of local colour, and that question I have simply and sufficiently answered; nor

would any one have been embarrassed by the answer who had ever seen a coal fire, unless the unfortunate writer for the *Globe* had done his best to communicate to them the infection of his misunderstanding. The press does good service in many things, but it is a wonderful instrument for the dissemination of imbecility; and there is this mischief in the nature of things, very prettily illustrated by the subject we are upon of local colour, that dullness, like local blackness, "is always black, however high you raise the light that falls upon it"; but as all whiteness may entirely cease to be white in the night, so there is no perspicuity which a resolute bluntness cannot obscure.

Thus much of answer may suffice touching what the writer for the *Globe* ventures to assert on his own responsibility; but his mention of Mr. Leslie obliges me to say a few words respecting this artist, which I had intended to reserve for another place and another time.

There has perhaps never been a greater master than Leslie of the phases of such delicate expression on the human face as may be excited by the slight passions and humours of the drawing-room or boudoir. His painting from the "Rape of the Lock," in last year's Academy, was to my mind an absolute masterpiece,[1] and perhaps the most covetable picture of its kind which I ever remember seeing by an English artist. Equal to Hogarth in several of its passages of expression, it was raised in some respects above him by the exquisite grace and loveliness of the half-seen face of its heroine, and by the playful yet perfect dignity of its hero. Nor was it less admirable as a reading of Pope, for every subordinate character had been studied with such watchful reverence to every word in which it is alluded to throughout the poem, that it seemed to me as if the spirit of the poet had risen beside the painter as he worked, and guided every touch of the pencil.

This, and much more than this, I wrote of the picture at the time it appeared, and sent my notice of it to the *Times*, together with one of Hunt and Inchbold. The letter was not inserted; and as the only part of it which I was very desirous to put before the public was that respecting Hunt, and I supposed the letter was too long for the *Times* in the

[1] His picture from Don Quixote, this year, is less important, but full of admirable power.

form in which it was first sent, I withdrew the notices of Leslie and Inchbold, and sent it again in this reduced form. It was then inserted; but it has always been a matter of serious regret to me that I had not the opportunity of directing the attention of the public specifically to this picture while it was on the Academy walls; and the more so, because it must very soon become my painful task to expose the weakness of the Author, when I would willingly have confined myself to praise of the Painter. The power over slight and passing expression is always a separate gift, eminently possessed by many caricaturists (for instance, in the highest degree by Leitch [1]); and it has never, I believe, in a single instance, been consistent with any understanding of the qualities of the highest art. It was, therefore, the extreme of rashness in Mr. Leslie to attempt a work of criticism on historical or sacred painting. But it was worse than rashness—it was an inexcusable want of sense, to venture, farther, into the criticism of landscape art; and his work, instead of becoming what it was intended to be by the ingenious Mr. Murray, a guide to young painters, will remain a perpetual warning to painters advanced in life, not to suppose that, by watching the smiles of coquettes, they can learn to appreciate the ideals of the masters of religious art, or, by a life spent among the sophistications of the world, become sharers in the spirit of the great painters who have communed with the heart of Nature.

[1] [Should this not be Leech?
GENERAL EDITOR.]

NOTES ON SOME OF

THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES

EXHIBITED IN THE ROOMS OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY

AND THE

SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS

No. II.—1856

PREFACE

In presenting the second number of these "Notes" to the public, distinguished as they are from most of the criticism brought under their notice, by the writer's attaching his name to them, I may perhaps be permitted one or two words respecting the probable difference, in aim, between anonymous and acknowledged criticism; and this the rather, that I found, last year, the offence which the work, in its very nature, could not but give, seemed to be deepened instead of diminished by the fact of its being openly owned to; and I was bitterly accused of malice or unkindness, as if malice were usually the most outspoken passion in the world, and unkindness always the greater when it was ready to answer for itself.

It is evident that there can be but three reasons for a writer's concealment of his personality. Either, firstly, having confidence in what he has written, he must have none in his name (as I wrote the first volume of "Modern Painters," sure of the truth of what I wrote, but fearing that I might not obtain fair hearing if the reader knew my youth). Or, secondly, he may know that his name would carry some weight with it, but may be ashamed of what he has written. Or, thirdly, there may be dangers of private loss or inconvenience, which he cannot speak openly without incurring, and which to avoid, he must get his opinion uttered as best he may, namelessly. Generally, I believe, the last reason to be the only legitimate one; and that, though in rare instances it may be wisdom to try to obtain a hearing under a masque, which would be refused if the face were shown, in all ordinary cases it should be not only with the voice, but with the eyes, that men should address their fellows. I never felt at ease in my "graduate" incognito, and although I consented, some nine years ago, to review Lord Lindsay's "Christian Art," and Sir Charles Eastlake's Essay on Oil Painting, in the "Quarterly," I have ever since

steadily refused to write even for that once respectable periodical.[1]

But, as touching these "Notes," of which I hope to continue the series yearly, I trust that the reader will feel that I have given him the best guarantee in my power of their sincere purpose, in signing them. If he thinks I always see the brightest colours in the works of my friends, or that it can only be in rooted malice that I point out an error in perspective, I have put it in his power to inquire into these matters, and to ascertain for himself whether indeed it is always a friend's work that I praise, or whether the transgressor of perspective law is conscious of any personal enmity between himself and me. And truly, it is a sorrowful thing to me, and one bearing witness, very bitterly, to the dishonesty of criticism in general, that people should be so ready to call every kind of faultfinding "hostility," the moment they can bring it home to a known person. One would think, to hear them, that there was no right or wrong in art; that every opinion which men formed of it was dictated by prejudice, and expressed in passion; that all praise was treacherous—all rebuke malignant—and silence itself merely a pause of hesitation between Flattery and Slander.

That it must sometimes be so, I am forced to believe, since the imputation of such dishonesty is constant; and it is strange, as well as frightful, to reflect how many forms of guilt are involved in one dishonest criticism. A common thief steals only property—a dishonest critic steals property, together with Fame, and the power of being useful. A common thief steals, for the most part, in imperfect knowledge of right. But a dishonest critic steals wittingly, and with all advantages of education. A common thief steals "to satisfy his soul when he is hungry;" but a dishonest critic, to satisfy his soul when he is envious. A common liar risks the discovery, and bears the penalty, of his own falsehood; but a lying critic shrinks behind his associates, and diffuses the discredit of his falsehood, while he multiplies its

[1] It has lately, I observe, in consequence, sought to amuse its readers by some account of my private affairs; of which—if the writer of the article in question is not ashamed of *his* name—I shall be happy to furnish him with more accurate details, as well as to recommend him to a school where he may learn what will not in the future be disadvantageous to his writings—a little more astronomy and optics.

influence. A common liar, being discovered, leaves other men's honour unscathed. A lying critic, discovered, has infected with his own disgrace the men behind whom he stooped, and cast suspicion over the general honour of his race.

This, and much more than this, is the real character of all anonymous writers against conscience; and the evil of it would be too great to be, with a remnant of charity, imputed to any human being, were it not that men continually commit their most blameable acts in the mere dullness of habit, and are like dogs taught to pilfer, in whom we pardon, to the imperfect nature, what would be unpardonable in a rational one.

It is little to say that I am free from guilt such as this. I have striven, from the first day when I began to write, to reach an impartiality far beyond that of mere uprightness. It is possible to be thoroughly upright, and yet unconsciously partial—continually deceived by personal associations or instincts. I have striven for that higher impartiality, which can only be obtained by labour in conquering predilections, by toil in the successive study of opponent schools, and earnest endeavour to sympathise with the separate spirit of each master I approached. And I can say fearlessly, that although it is not possible, in the time I am able to give to this work, to enter as I should desire into the consideration of every picture examined, yet I approach each of them with a distinct effort to gain the point of aspect by which its painter intended it to be commanded, and with a personal experience of the difficulties of various art, which renders me as charitable to true effort as disdainful of attempts to be great without labour. I say this, once for all, and the reader will perhaps pardon me this length of preface, since it is to assure him that I do not write these notes carelessly, nor look upon them as things of little importance. I look upon them, on the contrary, as one of the chief works which I have henceforward to do; and though, from its very nature, it must always be done hastily, it never will be done thoughtlessly, nor without the earnest hope that the pain I may have to give by unwilling blame, may be more than counterbalanced by the help which I know even the best painters may derive from the expression of an eager sympathy, and a faithful praise.

NOTES

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EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

If the reader, before fixing his attention on any particular work, will glance generally round any of the rooms, he will be struck by a singular change in the character of the entire exhibition. He will find that he can no longer distinguish the Pre-Raphaelite works as a separate class; but that between them and the comparatively few pictures remaining quite of the old school, there is a perfectly unbroken gradation, formed by the works of painters in various stages of progress, struggling forward out of their conventionalism to the Pre-Raphaelite standard. The meaning of this is simply that the battle is completely and confessedly won by the latter party; that animosity has changed into emulation, astonishment into sympathy, and that a true and consistent school of art is at last established in the Royal Academy of England.

Such an exhibition I have never yet seen, and the excellence of it is all the more to be rejoiced in, because it is every whit progressive. It does not consist merely in the splendour of the work of one noble artist, urged to unusual exertion (though this it can boast), nor in an accidental assemblage of the happiest efforts of several (though by this also it is adorned); but in the achievement which has rewarded the steady effort of all, now at last turned in the right direction, and ensuring for each, in process of time, such utmost success as his genius is capable of. There is hardly an exhibitor this year who has not surpassed himself, and who will not surpass himself again in every subsequent effort; and I know that they must feel this, and must be as happy in their sense of sudden power, and in the perception of the new world opened to their sincerity, as we spectators have cause to be in the gifts of art they offer us.

As for my own special work, I look upon it as now almost supererogatory—I have little to do but to multiply monotonous terms of praise; for, now that nearly every picture in the room has a meaning, and the observer is thus led to expect one, and to exert his attention, I believe that people will easily distinguish such meanings for themselves, without the impertinence of explanation; and as for minor fault-finding, I hold it generally useless in the cases of artists who mean well, and are painting from Nature. They will gradually find out their faults for themselves, and the spectator ought seldom to have his attention withdrawn from the real merits by any carping at passages of failure. Last year several pictures, in which to point to anything was to point to an error, were put into the best places, when it was right at once to mark their demerit, in order to check this system of complimentary precedence. But this year, the worst pictures are, for the most part, in retired places, and there I shall have pleasure in leaving them. If I find fault with any others, it is either to help the observer in forming his judgment of art in general, or to suggest a possibly better mode of practice to the painter.

10. Christmas Day in St. Peter's, at Rome, 1854. (*D. Roberts, R.A.*)

The change above spoken of is very manifest in this, the first picture of importance enough to attract the eye. It is both careful and brilliant; and though I do not myself like the subject (caring neither for the architecture, nor the pomp, of St. Peter's), I can answer for the faithful delineation of what must be to most people a striking scene. The effect of light and shade in this picture was very difficult, and is studiously wrought—note, for instance, the pretty and true change in the colour of the red cross in the dome, where it is half in shade and half in sun.

8. The Roadside Spring, Yorkshire. (*E. C. Booth.*)

From the pomp of marble and strength of multitude, let us turn back to this quiet nook beside the wild Yorkshire road, and consider a little whether the truer grandeur is in those lifted aisles or in this fragment of grey wall, overwaved by its few ears of corn, and ringing to the low voice of its lonely brooklet. The picture is not a first-rate one—it is not even a very special example of the advancing school; but the mind of the painter has been in happy tone when

he chose his subject, and if you examine it, kneeling (there is no other way), as perhaps you would those flowers and grass by the roadside itself, I think you will have pleasure in watching the delicate tracery of the bush leaves, and the stoop of the poppy over the wall, and the soft moss and grass in its crannies, and the clear water, just making the road a little browner where it spreads over it. I cannot answer for the feelings of others, but I think there is more benediction to be had here than out of the magnificence of St. Peter's.

17. "Love's Labour Lost." (*F. R. Pickersgill, A.*)

This picture presents the same elements of advance in a yet more curious and striking way. Mr. Pickersgill is already a Pre-Raphaelite in purpose, and only fails, as when artists first begin to work thoroughly from nature they always fail, by painting the easiest things too definitely better than the rest. I do not mean that they ought to paint the easy things worse; but only that a discordance is always felt in this stage of their study between the good accessory parts and failing principal ones. It is to be mended by conquering the difficult, not by surrendering the easy. If we examine the jewellery of the lady dressed in blue, in the centre, or the golden brocade of the one on the left, we shall find them very nearly right: the grass is also coming fast right; but Mr. Pickersgill cannot yet paint a face. A little more hard work, taking his models just as they come, without any fear or flattery, and he will win his spurs.

35. Home. (*J. N. Paton.*)

A most pathetic and precious picture, easily understood, and entirely right as far as feeling is concerned. Mr. Paton must have had more pleasure in painting this picture than in those fairy assemblies of his; and though the cottage details here are not so attractive as those nightshade and woodbine convolutions of leaf scenery, they are in reality better painted, and serve to better use. Mr. Paton has, however, a good deal yet to learn in colour. He should for this spring paint nothing but opening flowers, and, in the autumn, nothing but apricots and peaches.

39. The Stream from Llyn Idwal, Carnarvonshire. (*A. W. Hunt.*)

The best landscape I have seen in the exhibition for many a day—uniting most subtle finish and watchfulness

of nature, with real and rare power of composition. The mass of mountain in the centre is grandly arranged, so as best to set off the action of its contour, and contrasted with the diagonal cleavages of rock on the left: note how they run from the foreground up to the crest of the hill. The *rents* of cloud, and fading or forming of the hill shadows through them, are magnificently expressed. It only wants a little more subtlety in the finish of the gradations: portions of those clouds ought to be stippled so delicately that the eye could not trace the outmost touches —this would also give them more depth and unity. Seen a little way off, the work is spotty, at present, and wants bringing together; the worst part being the dappled blue sky on the left, in which the blue is not pure, nor the clouds soft, nor well set. The sheep in the foreground look too small—not but that real sheep in a Welsh foreground often do; but it is the painter's business to avoid this, and make everything look of its real size.

58. Cinderella, after her Sisters have left for the Ball. (*Miss E. Turck.*)

Very pretty, and well studied; but Cinderella does not look like the lady of a fairy tale. I am rather puzzled myself to know how her relationship to her remarkable godmother could best be indicated, so as to leave her still a quite *real* little lady in a real kitchen. But I am glad to see this sternly realistic treatment, at all events.

59. The White Owl. (*W. J. Webbe.*)

A careful study—the brown wing excellent. The softness of an owl's feathers is perhaps inimitable; but I think the breast might have come nearer the mark.

68. Little Red Riding Hood. (*R. Redgrave, R.A.*)

Mr. Redgrave has, as far as I know, never painted so good a landscape. The ferns in the centre are beautiful; and there is evidence of painstaking and of good feeling everywhere.

75. The Last Parting of Marie Antoinette and her Son. (*E. M. Ward, R.A.*)

I fear this picture must be excepted from the progressive list, and marked as one of the representations of the old school; but it is not a bad one.

94. The Abandoned. (*C. Stanfield, R.A.*)

Perhaps this also is rather a fortunate example of the

artist's work than a new phase of it. But I never saw a Stanfield I liked so well: the sea is superb—quite Turnerian in the mystery of the farther waves—and the sentiment of the picture very grand; and that not by means of twilight, or sunset, or moonlight, or any strangeness of arrangement or elaboration of idea, but by simple fact of deserted ship and desert sea.

101. The Greetings in the Desert, Egypt—"Selamet" Teiyibeen. (*J. F. Lewis.*)

The superposition of this picture to "West Australian" is the first glaring piece of bad hanging I note in the Academy this year. Mr. Cooper's picture, whatever its merits may be, is executed so as to have been seen quite as well in the upper place; while Mr. Lewis's cannot be seen in the least but on the line. It would take no trouble, any afternoon when the Academy closes, to change the places; and I am sure that Mr. Cooper would, in enforcing such an arrangement, be felt to have paid a just tribute to the talents of a great brother artist, and to have done himself little injury, and much honour.

Of the style of Mr. Lewis's picture I need only say that it is like that of his work in general, and refer the reader to the note on the example of it in the rooms of the Water Colour Society. There is, however, a very curious and skilful circumstance in the composition here; the neck of the camel was too serpentine, and stopped too abruptly after suggesting this undulation of line. The white cloud beyond at once varies, and continues, this serpentine tendency, leading it away towards the upper edge of the picture, while the straight flakes of cloud, descending obliquely to the right, oppose the two upright peaks of the saddle.

I may as well refer at once to Mr. Lewis's other work, 336 (the Academy is rich in possessing two). How two such pictures have been executed, together with the drawing for the Water Colour Society, all within the year, is to me wholly inconceivable; there seems a year's work in 336 alone. Yet it is not a favourable example of the master; the toil being too palpable and equal on the stones in the reflected light; where also there is neither colour nor form of interest enough to justify it. The draperies and trelliswork are faultlessly marvellous.

131. "Many Happy Returns of the Day." (*W. P. Frith, R.A.*)

A taking picture, much, it seems to me, above Mr. Frith's former standard. Note the advancing Pre-Raphaelitism in the wreath of leaves round the child's head. One is only sorry to see any fair little child having too many and too kind friends, and in so great danger of being toasted, toyed, and wreathed into selfishness and misery.

138. Mr. David Cox. (*Sir J. W. Gordon, R.A.*)

A very noble portrait, and, in the unassuming but powerful features, thoroughly characteristic. I am heartily glad to see this work of honour to a good painter so well accomplished.

145. Geraniums. (*Miss Mutrie.*)

146. Roses. (*Miss A. F. Mutrie.*)

I cannot say more of the work of the two Misses Mutrie than I have said already. It is nearly as good as simple flower-painting can be; the only bettering it is capable of would be by more able composition, or by the selection, for its subject, of flowers growing naturally. Why not a road-side bank of violets? 335 and 342 are the best examples, by these artists, in this exhibition.

147. Saved! (*Sir E. Landseer, R.A.*)

I wish this picture had not been put so high, for the bolder Landseer is in handling, the more interesting his work becomes, under close observance: nor does his peculiar system of clay-colouring gain at all in effect by distance. I never saw a child fall into water, nor a dog bring one out; but under such circumstances are not its clothes usually wet? and do not wet clothes cling to the limbs?

155. Her Majesty the Empress Eugenie. (*E. Boutibonne.*)

This would have been a really admirable portrait but for its foggy and slovenly distance. Complete that, and the work would look almost like life.

160. The Letter. (*E. Delfosse.*)

A fair example of a peculiar, and very clever, though perhaps I should hardly call it meritorious, style, lately much adopted by French artists. It is a mannerism of softness, and subduing of all very bright colours—more or less successful in result, of course, according to the painter's general powers; but yet seeming to be taught in schools of

art so extensive and so popular as to assimilate a large number of painters not only in style, but in aim, and prevent their emerging from a charmed circle of subjects—consisting usually of pretty women, sprightly in expression, but rather blunt in chiselling of features, wearing prettily brocaded dresses, and doing nothing, prettily. These works seem to be gradually constituting a species of manufacture, which supplies the French drawing-rooms with pictures, as Sèvres does with china. Nevertheless, one very original painter belongs to this school, of whom more presently.[1]

162. The Graces. (*W. E. Frost, A.*)

I believe Mr. Frost might be a painter if he chose; but he will not become one by multiplying studies of this kind; looking like Etty's with all the colour scraped off. Everybody knows well enough, by this time, that Graces always stand on one leg, and bend the other, and never have anything to fasten their dresses with at the waists. Cannot Mr. Frost tell us something new?

175. The Emperor Charles V. at Yuste. (*A. Elmore, A.*)

One of the works still belonging wholly to the old school: there is a good deal of fair painting in it, but an extraordinary missing of the main mark throughout. See the second paragraph of the long quotation in the catalogue:—

"Again the afternoon sun was shining over the great walnut-tree, full into the gallery. From this pleasant spot, filled with the fragrance of the garden and the murmur of the fountain, and bright with glimpses of the golden Vera, they carried him to the gloomy chamber of his sleepless nights, and laid him on the bed from which he was to rise no more."

Naturally we expect the painter to take some pains (as he has given this quotation) in the expression of verdure, fragrance, and sunshine. But the walnut-tree is grey, not green; the air, judging by the look of it, cannot be perfumed by anything but paint; and there is no sunshine anywhere, while the whitish light, which is given for it, shines not over the tree into the gallery, but from the back of the spectator. The exhibited pictures, by Titian (!) are greyer than all the rest. Charles must have bought them from an exceedingly dishonest dealer.

200. Peace concluded, 1856. (*J. E. Millais, A.*)

I thought, some time ago, that this painter was likely to be headed by others of the school; but Titian himself could

[1] See Notes on French Exhibition at the close of the pamphlet.

hardly head him now. This picture is as brilliant in invention as consummate in executive power; both this and Autumn Leaves, 448, will rank in future among the world's best masterpieces; and I see no limit to what the painter may hope in future to achieve. I am not sure whether he may not be destined to surpass all that has yet been done in figure-painting, as Turner did all past landscape.[1]

221. The Breakwater at Plymouth. (*F. R. Lee, R.A.*)

It is long since Mr. Lee painted such a picture as this; nor, as far as I recollect, has any one else yet so faithfully rendered the sweep of large waves over level wall. The sense of space is very great throughout, and there is really fine feeling and treatment in the dying away of the successive spray-clouds at the end of the long path of stone. There are several studies of sea by Mr. Lee this year which seem to me to mark quite a new energy in his mind: all of them are earnest, and entirely separated from the usual types of conventional gale and wave. This is the best, but 318 is another good example. Its rock foreground is evidently painted from nature, and is very fine in form; though there are awkward flaws here and there, the consequence seemingly of prolonged habits, hardly broken off, of working without reference to fact. For instance, in the calm pool of water on the left, the stones on the left side have reflections, but those on the right side, none.

230. Master Isaac Newton in his Garden at Woolsthorpe, in the Autumn of 1665. (*R. Hannah.*)

One of the somewhat incipient pictures of the rising school, but of considerable merit. The Nemesis of Pre-Raphaelitism is its way of fixing on precisely the ugliest things it can find to paint. I don't believe there is such another uninteresting tree-trunk within a circle of ten miles round London, as the one in the centre of this, Sir Isaac's garden. The execution is also hard, though careful: one of the most successful bits is the head of Diamond; not content with "amusing himself with a book," but having also half a mind to the apple; and proposing speedily to interfere with, if not prevent altogether, the discovery of the solar system.

[1] Note the hint for bringing more of nature into our common work, in the admirable modelling of the polar bear and lion, though merely children's toys.

262. The Village Postman. (*J. M. Carrick.*)

If the reader glances along the various pictures hung near the floor, in any of the rooms, he will find that nearly every other one consists of an attentive study; there is, indeed, so much care taken with so many minor works, that it becomes impossible to distinguish all as they deserve; and I may, perhaps, have missed some that contain more than study—real achievement. But I can only name this one, as a leading specimen, out of a large number not by any means perfect, but presenting many interesting natural scenes and thoughts, and highly conscientious in execution. There has been immense labour in this picture, and it is very genuine throughout: the old stone-slated roof and ivy are first-rate, and the figures of the child and its grandfather coming out slowly to see if there is indeed a letter, wrought with more than usual fidelity to rustic character.

295. "And the Prayer of Faith shall Save the Sick." (*J. Phillip.*)

I never yet saw so much progress made by any painter in one year as Mr. Phillip has made, from his stiff black and red figures and fans of last year, to this very sweet picture: the principal head, with its opalescent earring, is quite beautiful. There are several other works of great character and power by this painter.

300. An Interior. (*F. D. Hardy.*)

An exquisite little piece of interior painting; hurt only by some conventionality in finishing. For instance, how is it possible that, the sunbeams entering only by that one small window, the principal figures should be in full light, or the shadow fall at a steep angle from the knife-handle over the block in the left-hand corner? But, with his powers of execution, a little more faithfulness will make Mr. Hardy a perfect painter in this kind.

311. The Novice. (*J. C. Horsley, A.*)

There is always a sweet feeling in Mr. Horsley's pictures; this is an old story, but prettily told—the elder nuns watching anxiously and pitifully, and the dove seeking rest in the bosom.

312. Mid-Spring. (*J. W. Inchbold.*)

Though not a satisfactory picture, this is one of the most curious efforts of the Pre-Raphaelites this year. The place chosen has been a lovely spot, and the execution of the

hyacinths and grass is as close and wonderful a piece of work as there is on the room walls. Take a magnifying glass and look at the squirrel and bird on the tree high up on the left, and the two other birds flying in the wood beyond, and give time to the whole, and it will please you. But Mr. Inchbold must choose subjects with more mass of shade in them; this was, in its essential nature, impracticable, the light being all too high for imitation. Hence the apparent hardness of result.

It is quite worth while, some day, to bring a small opera-glass with you into the architectural room, to examine the exquisite painting of withered heather, and rock, in Mr. Inchbold's other picture, 1187.

320. The Glen, Chudleigh, Devon. (*W. F. Witherington, R.A.*)

Here is another great advance on the picture of last year: hurt a good deal by want of shadow-tone on the figures, and perhaps also by too great richness of subject. This excess of quantity is a grievous temptation to all artists: many of Turner's largest works were destroyed by it. Everything that is beyond the spectator's power of easy attention, and is yet not so perfectly painted as to call for his fully *excited* attention, hurts a picture instead of helping it.

352. Chatterton. (*H. Wallis.*)

Faultless and wonderful: a most noble example of the great school. Examine it well inch by inch: it is one of the pictures which intend, and accomplish, the entire placing before your eyes of an actual fact—and that a solemn one. Give it much time. Mr. Wallis has another very wonderful effort, 516, but it is harder and less successful. I suppose the face of Marvell is a portrait, but he does not look to me like a person who would return a bribe.

398. The Scapegoat. (*W. H. Hunt.*)

This singular picture, though in many respects faultful, and in some wholly a failure, is yet the one, of all in the gallery which should furnish us with most food for thought. First, consider it simply as an indication of the temper and aim of the rising artists of England. Until of late years, young painters have been mostly divided into two groups; one poor, hard-working, and suffering, compelled more or less, for immediate bread, to obey whatever call might be made upon them by patron or publisher; the other, of

perhaps more manifest cleverness or power, able in some degree to command the market, and apt to make the pursuit of art somewhat complementary to that of pleasure; so that a successful artist's studio has not been in general a place where idle and gay people would have found themselves ill at ease, or at a loss for amusement. But here is a young painter, the slave neither of poverty nor pleasure,—emancipated from the garret, despising the green room, and selecting for his studio a place where he is liable certainly to no agreeable forms of interruption. He travels, not merely to fill his portfolio with pretty sketches, but in as determined a temper as ever mediæval pilgrim, to do a certain work in the Holy Land. Arrived there, with the cloud of Eastern War gathered to the north of him, and involving, for most men, according to their adventurous or timid temper, either an interest which would at once have attracted them to its immediate field, or a terror which would have driven them from work in its threatening neighbourhood, he pursues calmly his original purpose; and while the hills of the Crimea were white with tents of war, and the fiercest passions of the nations of Europe burned in high funeral flames over their innumerable dead, one peaceful English tent was pitched beside a shipless sea; and the whole strength of an English heart spent in painting a weary goat, dying upon its salt sand.

And utmost strength of heart it needed. Though the tradition that a bird cannot fly over this sea is an exaggeration, the air in its neighbourhood is stagnant and pestiferous, polluted by the decaying vegetation brought down by the Jordan in its floods; the bones of the beasts of burden that have died by the "way of the sea," lie like wrecks upon its edge, bared by the vultures, and bleached by the salt ooze, which, though tideless, rises and falls irregularly, swollen or wasted. Swarms of flies, fed on the carcases, darken an atmosphere heavy at once with the poison of the marsh, and the fever of the desert; and the Arabs themselves will not encamp for a night amidst the exhalations of the volcanic chasm.

This place of study the young English painter chooses. He encamps a little way above it; sets his easel upon its actual shore; pursues his work with patience through months of solitude; and paints, crag by crag, the purple

mountains of Moab, and grain by grain, the pale ashes of Gomorrah.

And I think his object was one worthy of such an effort. Of all the scenes in the Holy Land, there are none whose present aspect tends so distinctly to confirm the statements of Scripture, as this condemned shore. It is therefore exactly the scene of which it might seem most desirable to give a perfect idea to those who cannot see it for themselves; it is that also which fewest travellers are able to see; and which, I suppose, no one but Mr. Hunt himself would ever have dreamed of making the subject of a close pictorial study. The work was therefore worth his effort, and he has connected it in a simple, but most touching way, with other subjects of reflection, by the figure of the animal upon its shore. This is, indeed, one of the instances in which the subject of a picture is wholly incapable of explaining itself; but, as we are too apt—somewhat too hastily—to accept at once a subject as intelligible and rightly painted, if we happen to know enough of the story to interest us in it, so we are apt, somewhat unkindly, to refuse a painter the little patience of inquiry or remembrance, which, once granted, would enable him to interest us all the more deeply, because the thoughts suggested were not entirely familiar. It is necessary, in this present instance, only to remember that the view taken by the Jews of the appointed sending forth of the scapegoat into the Wilderness was that it represented the carrying away of their sin into a place uninhabited and forgotten; and that the animal on whose head the sin was laid, became accursed; so that "though not commanded by the law, they used to maltreat the goat Azazel?—to spit upon him, and to pluck off his hair."[1] The goat, thus tormented, and with a scarlet fillet bound about its brow, was driven by the multitude wildly out of the camp: and pursued into the Wilderness. The painter supposes it to have fled towards the Dead Sea, and to be just about to fall exhausted at sunset—its hoofs entangled in the crust of salt upon the shore. The opposite mountains, seen in the fading light, are that chain of Abarim on which Moses died.

Now, we cannot, I think, esteem too highly, or receive too gratefully, the temper and the toil which have produced

[1] Sermon preached at Lothbury, by the Rev. H. Melvill. (*Pulpit*, Thursday, March 27th, 1856.)

this picture for us. Consider for a little while the feelings involved in its conception, and the self-denial and resolve needed for its execution; and compare them with the modes of thought in which our former painters used to furnish us annually with their "Cattle pieces," or "Lake scenes," and I think we shall see cause to hold this picture as one more truly honourable to us, and more deep and sure in its promise of future greatness in our schools of painting, than all the works of "high art" that since the foundation of the Academy have ever taxed the wonder, or weariness, of the English public. But, at the same time, this picture indicates a danger to our students of a kind hitherto unknown in any school; the danger of a too great intensity of feeling, making them forget the requirements of painting as an *art*. This picture, regarded merely as a landscape, or as a composition, is a total failure. The mind of the painter has been so excited by the circumstances of the scene, that, like a youth expressing his earnest feeling by feeble verse (which seems to him good, because he *means* so much by it), Mr. Hunt has been blinded by his intense sentiment to the real weakness of the pictorial expression; and in his earnest desire to paint the Scapegoat, has forgotten to ask himself first, whether he could paint a goat at all.

I am not surprised that he should fail in painting the distant mountains; for the forms of large distant landscape are a quite new study to the Pre-Raphaelites, and they cannot be expected to conquer them at first: but it is a great disappointment to me to observe, even in the painting of the goat itself, and of the fillet on its brow, a nearly total want of all that effective manipulation which Mr. Hunt displayed in his earlier pictures. I do not say that there is absolute want of skill—there may be difficulties encountered which I do not perceive—but the difficulties, whatever they may have been, are not conquered: this may be very faithful and very wonderful painting—but it is not *good* painting; and much as I esteem feeling and thought in all works of art, still I repeat, again and again, a painter's business is first to *paint*. No one could sympathise more than I with the general feeling displayed in the "Light of the World;" but unless it had been accompanied with perfectly good nettle-painting, and ivy painting, and jewel painting, I should never have praised it; and though I

acknowledge the good purpose of this picture, yet, inasmuch as there is no good hair-painting, nor hoof-painting in it,[1] I hold it to be good only as an omen, not as an achievement; and I have hardly ever seen a composition, left apparently almost to chance, come so unluckily: the insertion of the animal in the exact centre of the canvas, making it look as if it were painted for a sign. I can only, therefore, in thanking Mr. Hunt heartily for his work, pray him, for practice sake, now to paint a few pictures with less feeling in them; and more handling.

413. Subject and painter not yet named in the Catalogue. The former, not very intelligible; the latter is reported to be a younger member of the new school—Mr. Burton. His work is masterly, at all events, and he seems capable of the greatest things.

448. Autumn Leaves. (*J. E. Millais, A.*)

By much the most poetical work the painter has yet conceived; and also, as far as I know, the first instance existing of a perfectly painted twilight. It is as easy, as it is common, to give obscurity to twilight, but to give the glow within its darkness is another matter; and though Giorgione might have come near the glow, he never gave the valley mist. Note also the subtle difference between the purple of the long nearer range of hills, and the blue of the distant peak emerging beyond.

515. View on the Banks of the Thames at Maidenhead. (*J. D. Harding.*)

A very beautiful and well composed Harding: but *not* a view on the Thames at Maidenhead. The hills in this

[1] I believe, however, the painter was under worse difficulty in painting this goat than even with his sheep picture, it being, of course, impossible to get the animal to stand still for a moment in an attitude indicating utter weariness. Observe also, that though heavily painted, yet being done every whit from nature, the picture lights the room, far away, just as Turner's used to do (and compare the notes on Nos. 873 and 1002). Only Turner never makes a reflection in water brighter than the sky above it, which, unless the crystals of salt whiten the surface even of this glowing water, seems to be the case here. I suppose the water was painted at one season of the year and the sky at another —both from nature, but, in result, discordant, and afterwards unalterable, as the complex hues of those far-followed reflections do not admit of "toning down," but by separately re-painting every one. Observe, finally, the picture should, if possible, be seen on a dark day, or in twilight, when its fullest effect is developed.

picture vary from 1,500 to 2,000 feet in height. The clouds are admirably arranged: it is the best composed sky, after Lewis's, that I see in the rooms. But, considering Mr. Harding's well-known skill in trees, I am vexed, partly with myself and partly with him, because, after long consideration, I am totally unable to form a guess as to the species of tree meant in the group to the left.

532. The Prosperous Days of Job. (*W. T. C. Dobson.*)

One of the earnest readings of Scripture, which are the truest pride of modern art. How often has Job been painted with the look of a haggard, aged, and despairing mendicant—how seldom, in this first era of his life, the refined oriental lord; leading a life of mercy, and judgment, and truth. The despair indicated in the writhe of the lips and pressure of the knit hands on the head, in the fallen figure, is thoroughly grand; and the watching female figure above is very tender and lovely. All Mr. Dobson's works are good (though this is the best), as far as feeling is concerned; but their colour, or rather want of colour, is deeply to be regretted. Does Mr. Dobson really see Nature as always white and buff—or does he think Buff a specially sacred colour? In *my* mind, it is associated chiefly with trooper's jerkins.

542. Market Day. (*G. B. O'Neill.*)

Of the old school, but very delicately painted. There is far too much in it to be natural. It is a map of a market day, instead of a picture of one.

578. April Love. (*A. Hughes.*)

Exquisite in every way: lovely in colour, most subtle in the quivering expression of the lips, and sweetness of the tender face, shaken, like a leaf by winds upon its dew, and hesitating back into peace.

A second very disgraceful piece of bad placing—the thrusting this picture thus aside!

583. Chioggian Fishing Vessels, &c., running into the Lagune of Venice, on the approach of a borasco or violent squall, on the Adriatic. (*E. W. Cooke, A.*)

Another instance of the extraordinary good fortune which characterises the exhibition of this year, in possessing the happiest efforts of almost every master. Do any of us recollect so impressive a study of shipping as this by Mr.

Cooke, much as he has hunted such quarries across the foam? It is admirably true to the Venetian boat—and the Venetian boat and all the ways of it are beautiful.

592. Highland Mary. (*T. Faed.*)

Mr. Faed's best work this year; very lovely in its kind; and the distance, though conventional, well composed. Mr. Faed's time for repentance does not seem yet to have come—he will paint grandly, I think, when it does. His other picture is a mere echo of the popular one of last year.

615. Mary Magdalene at the Sepulchre. (*H. Le Jeune.*)

Another earnest and most touching reading of Scripture. I never saw that gaze of Mary into the sepulchre—just before she "turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing" —given so faithfully. Much fault might be found with the mere painting; but I will find none! for the main and moving facts are there. Give the picture time, and it will bring tears.

1190. The Eve of St. Agnes. (*A. Hughes.*)

A noble picture, apparently too hastily finished, and very wrongly put into this room. It looks too blue; but remember it is entirely a night piece, admitting moonlight into the chambers; and if a piece of real moonlight were seen, instead of the picture, through the walls of the room, it would look just as strangely blue: the fault which the eye catches is chiefly that the blue glass casts a white light, and the colours in the left hand subject are confused in relation. The ivy on the tree trunk has clearly been done without a natural model, and is not creditable to the painter of the ivy in No. 578. The half entranced, half startled, face of the awaking Madeline is exquisite; but the lover's, in both the centre and right-hand subjects, very far from satisfactory. If, however, the reader knows the poem, he will be grateful for the picture; and there is promise in it of high excellence.

873, 885, 1002 are three intensely faithful studies in the East, by Holman Hunt. The gleam of the Dead Sea in the distance of 873 is quite marvellous, and the drawing of the Sphinx is an invaluable record. Probably the reader who has never studied natural facts will think the colouring extraordinary, as Turner's used to be thought. It is, nevertheless, precisely true—touch for touch. I have given the

reasons of its apparent want of truth in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv., chap. 3, ss. 8, *et seq.*

I must here close my "Notes" on the present exhibition, though I know that I have missed count of many good pictures; but I am somewhat tired with previous work, and cannot meet the large range of excellence in the Academy this year with correlative exertion. One or two works, also, I have to note in other exhibitions.

SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS

The pictures in this pleasant room are so easily distinguishable and accessible, that I think it will be better to refer to them in the order of their importance (or that which seems to me such), than in the regular succession of the catalogue.

1. No. 134.

If this picture is painted in firm colours, and will stand against time; and if it gets into good hands, and is safely kept, it will one day be among things which men will come to England from far away to see, and will go back to their homes saying, "I have seen it," as people come back now from Venice, saying they have seen Titian's "Peter Martyr;" or from Milan, saying they have seen the "Sposalizio." I have no hesitation in ranking it among the most *wonderful* pictures in the world; nor do I believe that, since the death of Paul Veronese, anything has been painted comparable to it in its own way.

I rank it with Veronese's work, because it is painted on the same principles of colour and design; and shows just as much ease of hand, though the execution is modified by the smallness of scale, and by the resolution to obtain certain effects of light which the Venetian would not have cared for: but if this picture were magnified so as to show the figures the size of life, it would be felt at once that no work but Veronese's could stand against it for a moment; and I only regret that its admirableness of detail should be concentrated so as to become, to most people, all but invisible. If the reader will take a magnifying glass to it,

and examine it touch by touch, he will find that, literally, any four square inches of it contain as much as an ordinary water-colour drawing ; nay, he will, perhaps, become aware of refinements in its handling which escape the naked eye altogether. Let him examine, for instance, with a good lens, the eyes of the camels, and he will find there is as much painting beneath their drooping fringes as would, with most painters, be thought enough for the whole head : or let him look at the cane-work of the back of the chair on the right, and he will find as many touches in one of its meshes as, according to the notion of water-colour painting ordinarily, would suffice for the tracery of a Gothic window.

Yet, marvellous as this quantity of detail is, the quantity is not the chief wonder, but the *breadth*. It is amazing that there should be so much, but far more amazing that this Much should be all Right. Labour and delicacy we may find, unwearied and unsurpassable, in missal painting, and in old Flemish work of the Van Eyck school. But labour thus concentrated in large purpose—detail thus united into effective mass—has not been seen until now. All minute work has been, more or less, broken work ; and the most precious pictures were divisible by segments. But here, gradations which are wrought out through a thousand threads or meshes, are as broad and calm in unity as if struck with a single sweep of the hand. Look at the way the pale circle of the tent is gradated, through its woven pattern, with the effect of transparent light beneath. I have never seen anything quite comparable to it reached by art.[1]

Let us, however, recovering as best we may from our amazement at this toil, and this success, look for a little while at the meaning of the picture—meaning which we find indicated by the painter in the most subtle way. The hand of the principal figure droops negligently at its side, yet so as to point to an unfolded map. The letters on this map are of course reversed, as it lies open rightly for its

[1] Merely as a piece of technical composition, note the way in which this canopy is repeated and balanced by the matting below ; hide the matting with the hand, and see how topheavy the canopy becomes. The dead fawn, in like manner, repeats and relieves the colour-mass of the principal standing camel.

owner, therefore upside down to the spectator; but the title of it is carefully made legible—

"MAP OF"
"SYRIA,"
"ANCIENT AND MODERN."

and the picture itself is a map of antiquity and modernism in the East; the Englishman encamped under Mount Sinai.

The reader must pardon me a momentary allusion to work of my own; for it has not been without some toil that I, also, have been lately endeavouring to trace the kind of contrast which exists between the ancient and modern temper of the human race. Mr. Lewis was wholly ignorant of my work, and I of his. In closing an inquiry into the modern feeling respecting scenery consecrated by solemn associations, I said,—

"I do not know if there be game on Sinai, but I am always expecting to hear of some one shooting over it."

Some of those semi-serious people who never know earnest from jest, accused me of levity in saying this. I said it not in levity, but in stern soberness; yet certainly it was with strange surprise that I saw that this great painter had given his year's labour to develope a similar thought, and that, four months only after the sentence was written, the most notable picture on the exhibition walls of London was an accurate fulfilment of its words:—Mount Sinai, with a foreground of dead game.

Special examination of the points of various interest in this picture is, of course, impossible—it would need a separate essay. I shall only note one or two things which, under any circumstances, the reader should not miss.

Note first the labour in the sky. The whole field of it is wrought gradually out with touches no larger than the filaments of a feather. It is, in fact, an embroidered sky—Penelope's web was slight work compared to it;—such a thing, as far as I know, never painter endured to do before. The purpose of this is to get the peculiar look of heat haze, and depth of colour, with light, which there is in all skies of warm climates. It cannot be got otherwise: but, inasmuch as whatever work may be given to it, it cannot, in some

respects, be got at all, the *light* of it being unapproachable, it almost grieves me to see the labour spent to obtain only an approximate result. Still in this one picture, I feel that it ought to have been done, in order that all might be as well as it could be.

Secondly, Examine the rock drawing of the Sinai, exquisite alike in hue and form, and conquering, stone by stone, the difficulty which, to all landscape painters but Turner, has been hitherto unconquerable, of expressing fallen masses of debris in their endless complexity.

If I venture to speak of a fault in this part of the work, it is only as acknowledging that human strength must always fail somewhere: Veronese is sometimes too flat—Tintoret sometimes too dark—Leonardo sometimes too hard—Turner sometimes too mysterious—Lewis sometimes too definite. Throughout this picture we may trace, here and there, a slightly *linear* violence; as, for instance, in the black outline round the lower part of the dead fawn in the foreground, which is not entirely true, and gives the work, here and there, a slight aspect of meagreness. The lines of fissure and shadow on the rocks, and round the stones of the distant Sinai, are thus a little too sharp and thin; indicating some remains of the painter's old manner of using the pencil point, as in his sketches in Spain.

The faces, however, as well as the draperies, are entirely free from this fault, and the intensity of character reached in them surpasses, I think, all the painter's former efforts. Even the more distant figures are full of portrait character of the most perfect finish. It may be useful to any reader who is himself fond of drawing, to note the subtlety of *truth* on which all depends. Take, for instance, the head of the Arab between the Sheikh and the camel, and note the dim sparkle of light in one eye, missed in the other. A common painter would have put it into both; but he would have spoiled the head, for it could not have been in both. The point of light in the right one is the reflection, on the under part of the ball, of the light from the nose, which could, of course, be seen on the sunlighted side only. The Arab, whose face is half seen behind the tassel of the housings of one of the camels, which takes the place of his beard, is another thoroughly grand piece of character. There seems much difference of opinion as to the type of head adopted

for the figure of the Englishman. I think it very right;—quiet, delicate, firm, and Cœur-de-Lion-like. The two dogs, like all Lewis's animals, are inimitable.

I have nearly exhausted terms of praise, and have none left, now, strong enough for the complexity and skill of the *composition*. The deliciousness of some of the bits of grey and pale flickering colour, and the way the innumerable lines and hues flow together, without flaw or a fallacy anywhere, complete the strange merits and marvels of this work. I trust, whatever its destination, that measures may be taken to preserve it from excess of light, and from damp. Body-colour preserved (as in manuscripts) in shade, and kept dry, has stood unchanged for six hundred years; but the slightest adverse influences are to be dreaded for a work of this delicacy, when so much depends upon so little, and when every gleam of colour is precious.

It will be observed that on each side of this brilliant and delicate picture is hung a drawing of excessive darkness and boldness, by David Cox. This was thoroughly well judged —there is no rivalship—but a kindly and effective contrast. The two drawings of English moors (128, 140), gain in gloom and power by the opposition to the African sunlight; and Lewis's finish is well set off by the impatient breadth of Cox. No. 140 is a very interesting example of this master: so also the smaller ones, 234, 240.

83. Her Majesty the Queen inspecting the Wounded Coldstream Guards in the Hall of Buckingham Palace.

A very interesting and successful drawing, apparently full of good portraiture, and certainly of right expression. It is notable for its frank and firm execution; in general, artists are appalled by the presence of Majesty, and in their earnest desire to do well, are apt to lose their power, and make their work too soft or too polished; but Mr. Gilbert has retained his presence of mind, and has given an effective rendering of a touching and memorable scene.

23. Huntsman's Boy and Bloodhounds.

This is the best drawing Mr. Taylor has produced for some time, but best only inasmuch as it deals with a subject familiar both to him and to us, on a somewhat larger scale than usual. Indeed, as long as Mr. Taylor persists in his faith that natural form and colour are only to be represented

by an ingenious imposition of slops or blots, it is quite useless to criticise his work. Beyond a certain point he cannot, by any physical possibility, advance: that point he had reached fifteen years ago, and it is not a high one.

256, 271. "AN ITINERANT." "DEVOTION."

Two superb drawings by Mr. Hunt—fortunate in the features and expression of the models chosen, and, like all the master's work, consummate in execution. As a piece of artistical handling and dexterity, the woolly hair of the negro is a lesson which cannot be too long studied.

The other drawings by this master, in the room, are, of course, all good; but, perhaps, less *delightful* than usual. I miss his hawthorn blossom, mossy banks, and birds: there are two or three pounds of grapes—those in 285 particularly good;—but, when not on the vine, grapes are precisely the dullest fruit that can be painted; and I can only advise, or beg, any reader who is inclined to attend to me, never in future to buy any of Hunt's grapes. He wastes an inconceivable quantity of time on them, and this is the fault of the public, for the grapes always sell.

1, 4. STUDIES OF LAKE SCENERY. (*Mr. William Turner.*) The works of this painter are always tender in feeling, but the larger of these is a strained and mistaken effort; the second is very true and right.

22, 167. Two very interesting STUDIES OF SEA. (*Mr. Jackson.*) The breaking of the low waves in 167 is as true as can be; and both pictures are delicate and earnest in perception of phenomena of sea and sky. The *land* is bad, in both.

20. Another study of the same class (*Mr. Naftel*); not so good in execution, but well meant. It looks as if painted on the spot, and the cirri in the sky are very true; there is a pleasant sense of the evening wind whistling among the stones as the sun touches their edges with its last gleam. The handling is, however, flat and coarse; each of these stones ought to have had nearly as much work on it as there is in the whole picture. 52 is also an earnest effort, though very faulty in the work on the water. Mr. Naftel will find, on testing his work accurately, that he has cast the shadows inconsistently on the castle, and they destroy the effect of its light.

68. A quiet and unaffected study (*Mr. Duncan*), remarkable for the absence of all meretricious character. I love colour as well as most people, but confess that a little less cobalt and vermilion would better most of the pictures on the walls of this room.

90. "View in Glencoe." (*Mr. Rosenberg.*) This is one of the truest pieces of mountain study in the room—evidently wholly from nature, and though feeble in execution, satisfactory in general effect. But Mr. Rosenberg may depend upon it, mountains are quite as delicate as fruit, and he must take not less pains with them.

112, 165. Studies from Nature. (*Mr. Fripp*, and *Mr. Glennie.*) Very good in their way; yet rather things to be kept in the artist's folios, for their own use, than to be exhibited.

168. Sunrise on the Jungfrau. (*Mr. Collingwood.*) Striking in effect; and an attractive picture, but sadly wanting in accuracy of detail. If the artist would draw the mountain carefully, and then work out this same effect, with rock substance beneath it, he might produce a valuable drawing. And the effect itself, simple as it is, would have been twice as good if the artist had not indulged himself with a bright yellow light on his cow, and spots of pure white and yellow about the roots of his pines, while the first rays of dawn are still a mile or two above them, and cannot get down to them for an hour and a half yet, at the very least. The picture, as it is, cannot be considered a study from nature; and it forms a connecting link between the works above noticed, in which the artist's *intention*, at least, is to be true, and those forming the larger portion of the exhibition, in which the intention is to be pretty, or clever. These, though there is much dexterity in some of them, need not separately be noticed, as they involve little of interest, except variations in touch, or expedients for getting opposition in blue and orange, yellow and purple, according to the formulæ of colour-science. On the whole, the exhibition is greatly above the average; and the public seem to have discerned this, for the little bits of blue which the artists like to see completing their harmonies of colour, are now wanting to very few of the pictures. I am heartily glad to see this; for of all modes of spending money in self-indulgence, none are perhaps so collaterally kind, as the encouragement

of an art so healthy and pleasurable as Water-colour Painting.

I have no space left for detailed notice of the other exhibitions, but cannot pass unnamed the very remarkable picture in the rooms of the Society of British Artists, No. 110, "Eavesdroppers," by J. Campbell, one of the most earnest pieces of domestic homely truth I have ever seen: nor, in the French exhibition in Pall Mall, the series of cottage studies, by Edouard Frere, 150 to 155, quite unequalled, it seems to me, in sincerity and truth of conception, though somewhat dimly painted. (Compare note on pictures in Academy, No. 160.) I ought, perhaps, to have said, truth of *sight*, rather than truth of conception; for I have been informed that this artist, rambling from cottage to cottage, and telling the peasantry "never to mind him," watches and seizes some real moment of action in the undisturbed family; recording, also, with historical fidelity, the position of every article of domestic furniture, and with such scrupulousness, that being on one occasion requested to enrich a somewhat blank piece of background by the addition of some piece of delf or pewter which had caught the purchaser's eye in another study, "No," he replied, "I cannot do that: it was in another cottage."

I consider these pictures, therefore, as examples of true Historical Painting, and of very high value. It is quite impossible to say what importance may, in some future day, attach to such records of the French peasant life of the 19th century.

POSTSCRIPT

Generally speaking, the arrangement of the pictures in the Academy this year is better than usual: but the errors which are usually notable in various parts of the rooms seem to have been all concentrated in the one crying error of putting No. 122 nearly out of sight. I have a special dislike to pictures of a slate-grey colour, as well as of girls in dresses of pages; for which cause, in glancing round the room, I passed this "Burd Helen" by, as one of

the quaint efforts of some younger member of the rising school, neither deserving praise, nor warranting discouragement. Further examination of it leads me to class it as the second picture of the year; its aim being higher, and its reserved strength greater than those of any other work except the "Autumn Leaves." Its whiteness of colour results from the endeavour to give the cold grey of the northern fall of day when the wind is bleak, and the clouds gathering for storm; their distant cumuli, heavy with rain, hanging on the rises of the moorland. I cannot see, at the distance of the picture from the eye, how far the painting of the pebbles and heath has been carried; but I see just enough of the figures to make me sure that the work is thoughtful and intense in the highest degree. The pressure of the girl's hand on her side; her wild, firm, desolate look at the stream—she not raising her eyes as she makes her appeal, for fear of the greater mercilessness in the human look than in the glaze of the gliding water—the just choice of the type of the rider's cruel face, and of the scene itself—so terrible in haggardness of rattling stones and ragged heath—are all marks of the action of the very grandest imaginative power, shortened only of hold upon our feelings because dealing with a subject too fearful to be for a moment believed true. There are one or two minor faults in it—a horse nearly always stoops its head as it approaches the edge of a ford, and the erectness of its bearing in the picture takes away the look of truth in the entire incident, more than one could have supposed possible. I have some doubt also, whether, unless the spectator were himself supposed to be wading the ford, so as to bring the eye almost on a level with the water surface, the reflection of the sky could so entirely prevent the appearance of the pebbles through the water. They are rightly shown through the dark reflection at the horse's foot; and rightly effaced, in a great degree, by that of the sky; but I think they should not have been entirely so. These are, however, quite minor defects, and I merely name them lest they should be brought forward by adverse critics as if they were serious ones.

NOTES ON SOME OF

THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES

EXHIBITED IN THE ROOMS OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY

AND THE

SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS

ETC.

No. III.—1857

EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

As year by year, in the Royal Academy, the principles established by the Pre-Raphaelites are more frankly accepted, and more patiently put in practice, I observe that, notwithstanding all the substantial advantage derived from them, two results must necessarily follow, involving some disappointment to the public, and great mortification to the artist. I see that we shall have more wayside nooks, corners of green fields, pools of watercress streams, and such like, than can, in the aggregate, contribute much to the amusement of the restless and over-excited crowd of London spectators; and I see also that there will be so high an average of perseverance and care brought to bear on every subject, that both will pass unnoticed unless recommended by more brilliant qualities; and painters who flattered themselves that the devotion of a year's honest labour could not but make their pictures conspicuous, and their names illustrious, will find, with bitter disappointment, that patience and sincerity are no longer distinctive, and that industry will soon be less notable than sloth.

Respecting the approach of these inevitable calamities, it is only to be answered, to the complaint of the public, that we ought no more to weary of green lanes in Trafalgar Square than we do in Devonshire or Kent; and, to the disappointment of the artist, that although distinction cannot be, and should not be, conferred by the practice of any particular style, honesty of aim will always make his labour useful, and his life happy. Distinction, if it is justly won, can of course be won only by superior intellect; a change in the methods or objects of a school does not raise the capacities of the scholars to one level, nor render it more possible than it has been hitherto to be illustrious in large companies. But it ought to be a sufficient reward for much painstaking, if the art we practise guides us into continually greater sense of natural beauty, though that beauty may be manifested to

others as well as to us; and enables us to gain an honourable livelihood, though one wholly independent of laurel crowns.

The steady advance of just principles of painting is, however, strangely complicated in the present Exhibition with examples of error or of backsliding. The Pre-Raphaelite cause has been doubly betrayed, by the mistimed deliberation of one of its leaders, and the inefficient haste of another; and we have to regret at once that the pictures of Holman Hunt were too late for the Exhibition, and that those of Everett Millais were in time for it.

We will, as before, glance round the rooms in the order of the catalogue, sometimes breaking the line to go in quest of such pictures as it may be desirable to compare at once with that under consideration.

8. Au Sixième. (*J. C. Horsley, A.*)

A sweet sketch; we can hardly, in the present stage of general completion, call it more; and I regret this, for the subject is one which would have borne exquisite finish. The *innocent* life of the French grisette, if we may suppose the "Rigolette" of Eugène Sue to be a type of a large class, is one of the pleasantest to contemplate among all the conditions of labour which are dependent on modern European luxury. Surely, by the way, there should have been flowers at her window, as well as that piece of extravagance, on the table, into which she has been beguiled at the Marché aux Fleurs. The outlook of the window, also, being "au sixième," might have been made very interesting; views over Parisian roofs are nearly always so.

14. Narcissus. (*W. E. Frost, A.*)

The young Dryad on the right gives us an interesting example of ideal grace of action in "finding" a daffodil. The bough which she raises with her pretty arm has evidently been so extremely in her way, that the only wonder is how, under the oppressive circumstances, she ever found the daffodil at all. Dryads and Naiads are, I suppose, susceptible of shadows only from themselves; as I see the trees cast none upon them. Mr. Frost knows best; but if it be so, Dryads and Naiads are bad models, and mortal ladies, liable to chiaroscuro, would make better pictures.

28. A Crab and Lobster Shore. (*E. W. Cooke, A.*)

This very careful study just misses being quite right and

quite beautiful for want of a very slight degree of greater watchfulness—*not* greater labour. Merely by way of an instance of the kind of completion wanted, note the shadow of the man most to the right, leaning on the boat. It is a dark-brown shadow on a violet boat; in the probability of which, at that distance, I do not believe, but let that pass; this dark-brown shadow falls not only on the violet-coloured wood, but on a stripe of red paint and on some seams of paler colour. But it crosses all of them, remaining equally dark-brown. Now, a shadow which was rich brown on violet, would be orange-scarlet on crimson, and deep golden-grey on white; and all these changes ought to have been shown in that shadow by separate touches of pure colour. It is an infinitely more important matter that these transitions of hue should be given, than that mere force of chiaroscuro should be reached. A similar though less demonstrable monotony in hue causes all the careful work on the shore to look coarse. Each pebble is painted with two or three touches of some unvaried colour—usually about two for its bright, and one for its dark side; whereas each side would, in Nature, have been infinitely varied with hues either broken into texture, or melting into gradation. No touch of colour is or ever can be right, however small, if it be monotonous; and almost the first point of art with a great workman is getting the colour to palpitate within the touches, mingling it with endless cunning, and never leaving one spot bare, or one hue definable.

39. A Syrian Sheikh. (*J. F. Lewis.*)

When Mr. Lewis sends a picture to the Academy, it ought not to be one which even his truest admirers might easily pass without noticing. I have seen many of his sketches, executed in about three or four hours, which were more interesting than this highly wrought painting, and I am quite sure that he could paint a noble picture, rich in composition, and powerful in rendering of human character, in a couple of months, if he did not wilfully set himself subjects involving minuteness as a chief part of their expression He has much of the power of Veronese and Tintoret; and yet he takes Van Eyck for his model. Why not, if only by way of practice, paint two bold pictures in the beginning of the year; one for the Water Colour Society, and one for the Academy, and then devote the long

days to whatever finishing procedure he chose, on his pet pictures?—these last coming forth, in due or undue time, as it might be; but two vigorous works being, without fail, produced annually. Many reasons occur to me which might be urged in further recommendation of such a plan; one or two I will state presently, with reference to Mr. Lewis's drawing in the Water Colour Exhibition.

41. Interior of Duomo, Milan. (*D. Roberts, R.A.*)

It must be, I think, nearly ten years, if not more, since Mr. Roberts painted so careful a picture. It is entirely true to the scene, and unusually forcible and solemn in the effect of the painted window. But why does Mr. Roberts *always* draw painted windows lighter at the top than the bottom. I have often seen them lighter at the bottom than the top: certainly I never saw them, as in No. 418, darker at the bottom than the stone of their jambs; the whole breadth of casement telling as a gloom instead of a light. The tapestry about the pillars in this Milan is thoroughly painted, and the whole picture very enjoyable, as an expression of cathedral splendour, though not of cathedral solemnity.

50. News from Home. (*J. E. Millais, A.*)

We will pass this for the present; merely asking, as we pass, whether Mr. Millais supposes this to be the generally bright aspect of a Highlander on a campaign? or whether he imagines that Highlanders at the Crimea had dress portmanteaus as well as knapsacks, and always put on new uniforms to read letters from home in?

78. Peter the Great. (*D. Maclise.*)

This is a less exaggerated and more conscientious work than Mr. Maclise has yet produced. But I hope his conscience will become keener yet; for it is difficult to understand how a painter who goes through so much hard work can persist in the idea that there is no indistinctness in nature, or that there ought to be none. I have heard it said that Mr. Maclise is singularly far-sighted, and draws more decisively than other painters, in the belief that he sees more clearly. But though his sight had the range of the eagle's, and clearness of the lynx's; though it were as manifold as a dragon-fly's and as manageable as a chamæleon's, there is a limit to his sight, as to all our sights. He may perhaps be able to see that in Mr. Inchbold's

"Jungfrau" (at the top of the room, No. 360) the foreground is covered with gentians and Alpine roses; but he cannot count the leaves of the roses, nor the filaments of the moss which embroiders the ground with gold between the gentians' blue. And, as far as in his pictures I am able to compare his power of sight with that of other people, he appears to see, not more, but a great deal less, than the world in general. When we commonplace people look from Deptford to the other side of the Thames, we do not see houses like these behind Peter the Great, with blank square patches of grey for their doors and windows. That appearance is precisely the one presented to us by the models of houses which children buy to give their dolls dinner in. But when we look at real houses across the Thames, we see panes in the windows (or rags in them, as the case may be); bricks in the walls (or holes in them); planks in the doors; tiles on the roofs; incidents of all kinds, in form and colour, infinitely rich and abundant: more or less confused, indeed; but this confusion is not with us, the unfortunate plurality, peculiar to distant objects. All natural objects are confused to us, however near, however distant, because all are infinite. Nay, I cannot but think, that if even Mr. Maclise looks at a fly upon a wall ten yards from him, he may see clearly that it is a fly, but he will not be able to count the meshes in its wings; and if he looks fairly, and without any previous prejudice, at a girl's hair, however close to him, and however carefully curled, he will find that it verily does not look like a piece of wood carved into scrolls, and French-polished afterwards, as the curls of these observant young English ladies do. The stars, I think, are adverse at present to the painting of hair, and all the immortality that our pretty ladies can hope for in that respect must be Berenice's or Belinda's; for if Mr. Maclise thinks that hair is made of brown wood, the Pre-Raphaelites are all under the strongest conviction that it is made of red sand, and pass great part of their time in endeavours to enter Michael Scott's service, and make, if not ropes, at least locks, out of sea sand. It is not often that I plead for any imitation of the work of bygone days; but, very seriously, I think no pupil should be allowed to pass the examination ordeal of our schools of painting, until he had copied, in a satisfactory manner, a lock of hair by

Correggio. Once let him do that with any tolerable success, and he would know to the end of his life both what the word "painting" meant; and with what flowing light and golden honour the Maker of the human form has crowned its power, and veiled its tenderness.

103. Sacred Song. (*S. A. Hart, R.A.*)

This is a good study; better in many respects than Mr. Hart's larger pictures; but these sacred singers are not Dryads, are they? or has Mr. Hart a special theory concerning shadows,—to wit, that fingers may cast them on paper, but leaves cannot cast them on foreheads?

107. Titian preparing for his first Essay in Colouring. (*W. Dyce, R.A.*)

Well done! Mr. Dyce, and many times well done! though it is of little use for any of us to say so to you; for when a man has gone through such a piece of work as this, he knows he is right, and knows it so calmly, that it does not matter much to him whether people see it or not. This is a notable picture in several ways, being, in the first place, the only one quite up to the high-water mark of Pre-Raphaelitism in the Exhibition this year; for, although Mr. Carrick's (No. 135) is in several respects better painted, there are no difficulties of form and distance presented by his subject; while Mr. Dyce has encountered all discoverable difficulties at once, and chosen a subject involving an amount of toil only endurable by the boundless love and patience which are the first among the Pre-Raphaelite characteristics.

In the second place, this is the first picture yet produced by the school, in which the work has been at all affected by a sculpturesque sense of grace in form. Hitherto, every master who has ranked himself on this side, has been a colourist, and his subject has been chosen and treated with chief reference to colour, not intentionally, but because a colourist can do no otherwise; seeing, in all that he has to show, effects of light and hue first, and form secondarily. I cannot tell how far Mr. Dyce is capable of becoming a colourist, but he is not one yet; and although this deficiency is grievously hurtful to his work in many respects, in one it has advantaged it: he has rendered more of the finished grace and lovely composition of line in that oak foliage than has yet been seen in oak; if he could have

coloured it better he would have softened its edges, and carried the eye more to gleams of green and shades of purple, slightly losing the lines of leaf and branch; for art always loses something, or else we should not know it from reality, and it is interesting to see, for the first time, in the annals of the rising school, this inevitable loss taking place in colour instead of form; and the landscape painted with a sculptor's precision, and a sculptor's love of grace.

Though, however, we may contentedly part with a little green and purple in oak leaves for the sake of exquisiteness in delineation, we cannot part so lightly with the blood of Titian; no boy could ever have coloured a Madonna's face who had so little colour in his own. And there was not the least need for this failure; because, though I do not think Mr. Dyce will ever himself colour like a Venetian, I see, by the way he has painted the flowers and the boy's dress, that he has quite as much eye for colour as ever Leonardo had; and he may paint flesh quite as well as Leonardo, if he likes.

Only one cavil more. Whatever Ridolfi may say (I have not had time to look), Titian's actual first attempts must have been of a very different kind, and in another order of landscape. It was not in the green, delicate-leaved twilight of a lowland garden, nor among its sweet measurements of level grass, that the boy received his first impressions of colour, but among the strong trunks and rugged ground of the forests of Cadore, and in the dawns beyond its desolate mountains, when the massy clouds stood quiet between the burning and the blue. Nor would it have been a statue such as this which first made him dream of the Madonna; but rather some fresco of a wayside chapel, where she stood with her hands folded, and the moon under her feet, and the companies of heaven around her, crown above crown, circlet beyond circlet,—gleaming golden in the arched shade.

Conceding, however, Mr. Dyce's theory of the place, and accepting, with perhaps a little farther demur, the graceful and undisturbed dress of the boy for such as the young Titian was likely to have worn to work in (particularly if the work began with flower-hunting), we may proceed to enjoy the picture heartily in all other respects,—the expression of the boy being excellent, and the flowers, grass, leafage, and dress, down to the minutest fold of the purple

lining of the cap, painted so that no one need ever hope to do much better.

It will take about an hour to see this picture properly.

135. Thoughts of the Future. (*R. Carrick.*)

Quite faultless, as far as I can see; and one of the best, if not absolutely the best, examples of *balanced* completion which the school has produced. It is intensely difficult to put such finish into the stripes of pillow and pattern of counterpane, and yet not to let one thread become falsely conspicuous.

It is not, of course, a work involving high powers of invention, and therefore it does not yet place its painter in the highest rank of artists; but as far as it reaches it is right: and I say little of it, only because the subject is simple and the success absolute: it is a picture of which explanation is needless, and criticism impossible.

136. The Mountain Path. (*J. T. Linnell.*)

Singularly luminous and full of air; Mr. Linnell seems to be making the most rapid advances; and has good cause to be happy in the general appreciation of his work; for I notice that almost every person who looks at this picture, enjoys, or praises it.

138. The Young Brother. (*W. Mulready, R.A.*)

Without exception, the least interesting piece of good painting I have ever seen in my life. I call it a "piece of painting," not a "picture," because the artist's mind has been evidently fixed throughout on his modes of work, not on his subject—if subject it can be called. Is it not sorrowful to see all this labour and artistical knowledge appointed, by a command issued from the grave, to paint,—and employed for a couple of years in painting,—for the perpetual possession and contemplation of the English people, the ill-laced bodice of an untidy girl? Yet the picture will be a valuable one; perhaps the most forcible illustration ever given of the frivolous application of great powers. For this is not, observe, the commonplace littleness of an inferior mind, nor commonplace wantonness of a great one. We have had examples enough of mean subjects chosen by the trifling, and slight subjects chosen by the feeble: nor is it a new thing to see great intellects overthrown by impetuosity, or wasted in indolence; stumbling and lost among the dark mountains, or lying helpless by the wayside, listless or

desolate. All this we have seen often; but never, I think, till now, patience disappointed of her hope, and conscientiousness mistaken in her aim; labour beguiled of her reward, and discretion warped in her choice. We have not known until now that the greatest gifts might be wasted by prudence, and the greatest errors committed by precision.

For it is quite curious how, throughout this composition, the artist seems to have aimed at showing the uselessness of all kinds of good. There is an exquisite richness of decoration in the pattern of the yellow dress, yet the picture is none the richer for it; an exquisite play of colour in the flesh, yet the girl is none the fairer for it: her dress is loose, without grace; and her beauty hidden, without decency. The colour of the whole is pure, but it does not refresh; its arrangement subtle, but it does not entertain: the child laughs without gaiety; and the youth reclines without repose.

We may be sure, however,—which is some comfort,—that failure of this total kind *cannot* take place unless there is somewhere a wilful departure from truth: for truth, however ill-chosen, is never *wholly* uninteresting. For instance, here, the sense of country life is destroyed by the false forms of the trees, which are only green horizontal flakes of colour, not foliage; and the dead blue dress of the youth, though it seems at first well painted, is shaded either with pure dark blue, dirty green, or violet, wholly at random, and of course, therefore, with destruction of brilliancy as well as of relief; while the folds of the girl's gown, though they at first look well drawn, are mere angular masses, without either flow or fall.

160. A Signal on the Horizon. (*J. C. Hook, A.*)

It seems to me that this is the sweetest and most pathetic picture of an English boy that has been painted in modern times; and as for the thought, and choice of scene, and rendering of expression throughout the picture, they are all so true, so touching, and so lovely, that I do not choose to speak many words about them, lest I should do the reader harm instead of good by some discordant expression; it would need a little finished idyl of Tennyson to express them rightly. But when you have made out all this design at your leisure, go at once to the "Ship Boy's Letter" (545): for the whole heart of rural England is in that, as of sailor

England in the other. Take care to read the direction of the envelope on the ground with the Dover postmark,

"William Dibble . . . Ongar Hatch, Surrey;"

and what is legible of the beginning of the letter,

"Off Cape town.
"My dear Father and Mother . . . thank God. . . dear sister."

188. At Berncastle, on the Moselle. (*G. C. Stanfield.*)

There are more signs of present progress and future power in this painting, than in any I have yet seen by the younger Stanfield; it looks like an attentively rendered portrait of the place. The hilly ground in the distance is peculiarly well drawn (and was peculiarly difficult to draw); and the shadow of the cross on the ground is followed with care among the stones, instead of being laid in with random dashes to show cleverness of touch. The place was worth drawing too. That must be an interesting example of cross, with the sculptured Madonna at the foot of it. But Mr. Stanfield must either draw his figures better or worse; he must either make them agreeable, or leave them slight. The oxen and their driver on the left, and the figure with the basket, sitting at the foot of the cross, are precisely types of the worst kind of figure which it is possible to introduce in landscape,—definitely ill-drawn, and pertinaciously repulsive.

201. A Swiss Meadow in June. (*H. Moore.*)

I cannot judge of this study, it gives me too much pleasure; but it seems to me *very* perfect in general harmony of light, and in the sweet motion of the clouds along the horizon. People are beginning, I see, to feel Switzerland truly at last; and how more may sometimes be done by a single blue mound of pines, like that on the right of this field, than by piled pyramids of rock and snow.

204. Port na Spania. (*C. Stanfield, R.A.*)

I am very glad to see Mr. Stanfield's work in this exhibition on a little smaller scale than of late years; and proportionally more careful. This is a most interesting picture; and quite notable for its new conditions of cloud. Usually Mr. Stanfield gives us only solid rolling clouds behind his

hills; I do not recollect his ever before painting their floating films in front of the crags, whose geology, by the way, seems rendered with the greatest care; and beautifully picturesque geology it is; the horizontal beds of the red and black lavas opposing the pillared precipice at the summit. Two points only seem to me to be regretted; the first, that the turf, half-way up the hill-side, looks like a bank close to the spectator, the overhanging edges having the aspect of one thickness of turf only, though the little yellow and black figures below show us that these turf edges are at least from twelve to twenty feet high. The second, that the ship does not look as if she struck with any force or weight: I cannot get rid of the idea that she is a small model, and, moreover, a small model drawn with no great truth of perspective; I am certain the curves of her stern, where it rises from the deck, are false; if she is strained there, the strain should have been distinctly shown, and if not, the error in the lines of the starboard side would be demonstrable in a moment, if it were worth while to give a diagram for the purpose.

I like the black box particularly, though it does not look like one that would float. How well Mr. Stanfield could colour, if he liked, and took as much pains always as he has with this one dark square! What a gain, too, would it not be to us all, if he did take this trouble! The calm in the "Gulf of Salerno," for instance (371), would be quite a delightful picture, if only the sails had a little sun upon them. Even without sun, I wholly disbelieve in clay colour, either in sails or seamen, or in anything whatever but clay.

213. Sir Roger de Coverley in Church. (*C. R. Leslie, R.A.*)

Not attractive or interesting at first sight, it will repay an attentive study with continual increase of charm, and of wonderment. It is, of course, not well coloured; but though meagre and cold, it is not coarse; nor, in its own pale key, inharmonious; while the subtleties of expression are endlessly delightful in their delicate mystery. This light touch of Leslie's seems to me to show an immense advance in power since he gave us the somewhat laborious humour of Sancho and the Duchess.

Do not miss the little girl holding up her hands in awe, and delight, at the entire impropriety of behaviour on the

part of the swallow, neither by servant nor knight to be touched on his wings, or impressed in his mind.

219. Autumn Morning. (*T. Creswick, R.A.*)

Well worked; but too complex: the fallen trunk with its bare branches on the right, though its lines, in mere composition, are useful in repeating those of the opposite bank, breaks up the picture by their number; we did not need so many straggling arms there. Mr. Creswick is also always a little too heavily green in foliage: when trees are green at all, they are green to brighter and better purpose.

283. A Dream of the Past. (*J. E. Millais, A.*)

The high praise which I felt it my duty to give to this painter's work last year was warranted by my observing in it, for the first time, the entirely inventive arrangement of colour and masses, which can be achieved only by the highest intellect. I must repeat briefly here what I have had occasion hundreds of times to explain elsewhere, but never yet often enough to get it generally understood,—that painters are broadly divisible into three classes: first, the large class who are more or less affected or false in all their work, and whose productions, however dexterous, are of no value whatever; secondly, the literally true painters, who copy with various feeling, but unanimously honest purpose, the actualities of Nature, but can only paint them as they see them, without selection or arrangement; whose works are therefore of a moderate, but sterling value, varying according to the interest of the subject: lastly, the inventive painters, who are not only true in all they do, but compose and relieve the truths they paint, so as to give to each the utmost possible value; which last class is in all ages a very small one; and it is a matter to congratulate a nation upon, when an artist rises in the midst of it who gives any promise of belonging to this great Imaginative group of Masters.

And this promise was very visible in the works of Millais last year; a new power of conception being proved in them —to instance two things among many—by the arrangement of the myrtle branches in the "Peace," and the play of the colours in the heap of "Autumn Leaves." There was a slovenliness and imperfection in many portions, however, which I did not speak of, because I thought it accidental,—consequent, probably, on too exulting a trial of his new powers, and likely to disappear as he became

accustomed to them. But, as it is possible to stoop to victory, it is also possible to climb to defeat; and I see with consternation that it was not the Parnassian rock which Mr. Millais was ascending, but the Tarpeian. The change in his manner, from the years of "Ophelia" and "Mariana" to 1857, is not merely Fall—it is Catastrophe; not merely a loss of power, but a reversal of principle: his excellence has been effaced, "as a man wipeth a dish—wiping it, and turning it upside down." There may still be in him power of repentance, but I cannot tell: for those who have never known the right way, its narrow wicket-gate stands always on the latch; but for him who, having known it, has wandered thus insolently, the by-ways to the prison-house are short, and the voices of recall are few.

I have not patience much to examine into the meaning of the picture under consideration. If it has one, it should not have been disguised by the legend associated with it, which, by the way, does not exist in the Romance from which it professes to be quoted, and is now pretty generally understood to be only a clever mystification by one of the artist's friends, written chiefly with the view of guarding the awkward horse against criticism. I am not sure whether the bitterest enemies of Pre-Raphaelitism have yet accused it of expecting to cover its errors by describing them in bad English.

Putting the legend, however, out of question, the fancy of the picture is pretty, and might have been sublime, but that it is too ill painted to be dwelt upon. The primal error in pictorial grammar, of painting figures in twilight as bright as yellow and vermilion can make them, while the towers and hills, far above and far more exposed to light, are yet dark and blue, could hardly have been redeemed by any subsequent harmonies of tone, much less by random brilliancy: and the mistake of painting the water brighter than the sky which it reflects, though constant among inferior painters in subordinate parts of their work, is a singularly disgraceful one for a painter of standing.

These, and the other errors or shortcomings in the work, too visible to need proving, and too many to bear numbering, are all the less excusable because the thought of the picture was a noble one, and might seem both justly to claim, and tenderly to encourage, the utmost skill and patience in its

rendering. It does not matter whether we take it as a fact or as a type: whether we look verily upon an old knight riding home in the summer twilight, with the dust of his weary day's journey on his golden armour, taking the woodman's children across the river with him, holding the girl so tenderly that she does not so much as feel the grasp of the gauntlets, but holds the horse's mane as well, lest she should fall; or whether we receive it as a type of noble human life, tried in all war, and aged in all counsel and wisdom, finding its crowning work at last to be bearing the children of poverty in its arms, and that the best use of its panoply of battle is to be clasped by the feeble fingers, wearied with gathering the sheddings of the autumnal woods. It might bear a deeper meaning even than this: it might be an image less of life than of the great Christian Angel of Death, who gives the eternal nobleness to small and great; and clasps the mean and the mighty with his golden armour: Death, bearing the two children with him across the calm river, whither they know not; one questioning the strange blue eyes which she sees fixed on heaven, the other only resting from his labour, and feeling no more his burden. All this, and much more than this—for the picture might be otherwise suggestive to us in a thousand ways,—it would have brought home at once to the heart of every spectator, had the idea but been realised with any steadiness of purpose or veracity of detail: as it stands, it can only be considered as a rough sketch of a great subject, injudiciously exposed to general criticism, and needing both modification in its arrangement and devoted labour in its future realisation.

I am sorrowfully doubtful, however, how far Mr. Millais may yet be capable of such labour. There are two signs conspicuous in his this year's work, of augury strangely sinister; the first, an irregularity in the conception of facts, quite unprecedented in any work that I know in the Realistic schools of any age; the second, a warped feeling in the selection of facts, peculiar, as far as I know, to Millais from his earliest youth.

I say first an irregularity of conception. Thus it seems only to have struck the painter suddenly, as he was finishing the knight's armour, that it ought to be more or less reflective; and he gives only one reflection in it—of the crimson cloth of the saddle, that one reflection being violently

exaggerated: for though, from a golden surface, it would have been, as he has rendered it, warmer than the crimson, no reflection is ever *brighter* than the thing reflected. But all the rest of the armour is wholly untouched by the colour of the children's dresses, or of their glowing faces, or of the river or sky. And if Mr. Millais meant it to be old armour, rough with wear, it ought to have been deadened and darkened in colour, hacked with edges of weapons, stained with stains of death; if he meant it merely to be dusty, the dust should have lain white on some of the ridges, been clearly absent from others, and should have been dark where it was wet by the splashing of the horse. The ripple of the water against the horse itself, however, being unnoticed, it is little wonder if the dash of the chance spray is missed. A more manifest sign still of this irregular appliance of mind, is in the fact that the peacock's plume, the bundle of wood, and the stripes of the saddle-cloth are painted with care; while the children's faces, though right in expression, are rudely sketched, with unrounded edges, half in rose colour and half in dirty brown. Vestiges of his old power of colouring, still unattainable by any other man, exist, however, in that saddle-cloth, and in the peacock's feather. But the second sign, the warping of feeling, is a still more threatening one. The conception of his second picture (408) is an example of the darkest error in judgment,—the fatalest failure in the instinct of the painter's mind. At once coarse and ghastly in fancy, exaggerated and obscure in action, the work seems to have been wrought with the resolute purpose of confirming all that the bitterest adversaries of the school have delighted to allege against it; and whatever friendship has murmured, or enmity proclaimed, of its wilful preference of ugliness to beauty, is now sealed into everlasting acceptance. It is not merely in manifest things, like the selection of such a model as this for the type of the foot of a Spanish lady, or the monstrous protrusion of the lover's lip in his intense appeal for silence; but the dwelling perpetually upon the harshest lines of form, and most painful conditions of expression, both in human feature and in natural objects, which long ago, when they appeared in Millais's picture of the "Carpenter's Shop," restrained the advance of Pre-Raphaelitism; and would arrest its advance now, unless

there were other painters to support its cause, who will disengage it from unnaturalness of error, and vindicate it from confusion of contempt.

For Mr. Millais there is no hope but, in a return to quiet perfectness of work. I cannot bring myself to believe that powers were given to him only to be wasted, which are so great, even in their aberration, that no pictures in the Academy are so interesting as these, or can be for a moment compared with them for occasional excellence and marvellousness of execution. Yet it seems to be within the purpose of Providence sometimes to bestow great powers only that we may be humiliated by their failure, or appalled by their annihilation; and sometimes to strengthen the hills with iron, only that they may attract the thunderbolt. A time is probably fixed in every man's career, when his own choice determines the relation of his endowments with his destiny; and the time has come when this painter must choose, and choose finally, whether the eminence he cannot abdicate is to make him conspicuous in honour, or in ruin.

355. Bon Jour, Messieurs. (*F. Stone, A.*)

Thank you, Frank; very heartily thank you. There has not been a greater benefit, in way of pictures, bestowed on us this year. It is good for us, after walking, as walk we must so often, up and down the grey streets of London, watching the gay carriages with the sorrowful faces in them, and the fading beauties, and wasting pleasures, and yet more wasting toils, to remember that within a bird's flight of us, along the top of Calais' cliffs, the fisher's cart-horse trots to market through the morning air; that the idle fisher-boy tosses his limbs behind for gladness; and that fisher-girls are laughing, with a bird's song in every laugh;—crowned with sacredness of happy life, and strength of careless peace, and helpful innocence.

442. Morning after a Gale. (*E. W. Cooke, A.*)

Very awful, after we have looked at it a little while; at least that bronze vessel is so to me—a ship that is not, and yet is,—the true spectre ship, whose sight is destruction; nor less so the skeleton of the boat with the wild waves sifting through the bones of her, and the single figure waiting on the desolate ship's deck, and saved by its faithfulness. Was Mr. Cooke indeed a little inspired by Turner's great "Shipwreck;" or is the partial resemblance of arrangement,

in the position of the larger boat and wreck, accidental? I wish he would try to beat Turner in one thing, in which not only Turner, but all marine painters whatever, to this day, are conquerable enough by a little pains,—sea *foam*, namely, When shall we have foam as well as waves? It *can* be drawn, not quite rightly, but far better than ever hitherto; and the first painter who succeeds with it, provided he is at all a good artist in other respects, and has not merely found out a trick of foam, will make all by-gone sea pieces look like the worn-out canvass waves of a theatre.

501. MONTAIGNE. (*H. Wallis.*)

Not, I think, quite so successful as the "Chatterton" of last year; but it contends with greater difficulties, and is full of marvellous painting. It is terribly hurt by its frame, and by the surrounding colours and lights; seen through the hand, the effect is almost like reality. That is a beautifully characteristic fragment of homely French architecture seen through the window.

I should think this picture required long looking at, and that it is seen to greater disadvantage by careless passers by than almost any of its neighbours.

542. RYDAL. (*S. M. Carrick.*)

This is the most important of the various studies from nature, all more or less successful, which surround us in the Academy this year. I am heartily sorry to pass them by, *en masse*, especially as most of them, such as 214, 215, 268, 1136, and others, are incomparably more elaborate and valuable than any thing of the kind I have to notice in the water-colour exhibitions; only the water-colour draughtsmen have more power in educating public taste, partly from reputation and partly from the pleasantness of water-colour as a decoration of rooms; so that I can give no more time to these oil studies, various and beautiful as they are. This large one is most reverent in its fidelity to the reflections of the quiet lake, most skilful in its rendering of the dim light on the distant hills. I never have seen retiring distance, in light of this kind, so well rendered. The stream has been studied with equal care; but it is impossible to paint clear running water ripple by ripple: some conventionality of freedom must be allowed always.

556. THE GOING DOWN TO NAZARETH. (*W. C. T. Dobson.*)

Very tender in expression, but commonplace; and in

general idea more or less false or improbable. Mr. Dobson must see to it, or he will be cast away on the rock of Purism; he is already, both in this picture and the "Reading the Psalms" (No. 63), more infected than he was last year by the great Purist theory of the sanctity of clay colour. Now it is precisely clay and its colour which are the least sacred things in the world: because all heavenly effort or action whatever is a conquest of the clay; from the first conquest of it by the breath of life, to the last conquest of it by the baptism with fire; and in the least things as in the greatest, it is fire and its colour which are sacred,—not dust. These imperfect religious painters, headed and misguided by Ary Scheffer, are all just like Naaman; they think they cannot worship rightly unless there "be given unto thy servant two mules' burden of earth."

562. Waiting for the Verdict. (*A. Solomon.*)

Very full of power; but rather a subject for engraving than painting. It is too painful to be invested with the charm of colour.

597. Ploughing at Seville. (*R. Ansdell.*)

More interesting than cattle pieces are generally; but without special merit of any kind, and quite out of its proper place. Why should work like this be on the line?—unless the pictures are treated as furniture only, and the black masses in this case set off the room: I believe there is an arbitrary rule about the size of animals, which allows those drawn to a diminished scale to be on the line, but mercilessly raises those which like Landseer's (77) are of life size; I believe all such rules to be very harmful. Good work should be put near us, whatever its scale; and we ought to be able at our ease to study the wonderful execution of the fur in Landseer's large grey mountain hare, and to see, without a telescope, that there *is* a hare in Mr. Oakes' exquisite Welsh foreground (596). How foolish we shall think ourselves, when once we get rooms where we can put our year's pictures every one in a good place, for ever having done painters all this injustice, and brought upon ourselves all this discomfort, merely for want of a furlong or two more of wall, and waste ground!

602. Autumn Flowers. (*Miss A. F. Mutrie.*)

This lady's work is always beautiful; but there is some incongruity between the luxuriant evidence of education in

the group of central flowers, and the roughness of the ferny bank they rest upon. All true lovers of art, or of flowers, would rejoice in seeing a bank of blossoms fairly painted; but it must be a bank with its *own* blossoms, not an unexpected picnic of polite flowers in the country. Neither need the sky be subdued in colour. I believe the most beautiful position in which flowers can possibly be seen is precisely their most natural one; low flowers relieved by grass or moss, and tree blossoms relieved against the sky. How it happens that no flower-painter has yet been moved to draw a cluster of boughs of peach blossom, or cherry blossom, or apple blossom, just as they grow, with the deep blue sky between every bud and petal, is more than I can understand; except that I know, in art, the likeliest and properest thing for every body to do is almost always the last that will be done.

614. Adopting a Child. (*F. B. Barwell.*)

A well-considered and expressive picture; somewhat hurt by the unmanageable phenomena of modern life, in dress and book-cases; which are the more to be regretted, because the arrangement of purple and green in the mother's shawl shows that Mr. Barwell could produce majestic pieces of colour with other materials. It tells its story plain enough; but if the spectator passes hastily, he might nevertheless miss the indication of the reason for the adoption, in the portrait of their own lost child, which hangs behind the parents; and to which the girl, shrinking from them to her mother's side, evidently bears a close resemblance.

994. When the Leaves begin to Turn. (*A. W. Hunt.*)

Consummate in easy execution and blended colour; there is nothing else like it this year. The subject is ill chosen, being confused in mass and incapable of effective treatment; but, taken merely as a study, birch foliage and mossy stones *cannot* be done better. I do not know what kind of feelings the inferior painters of such subjects have, whose works, by chance or right, are on the line this year in the principal rooms; but I think that if I had painted some of those well-shown foregrounds, I would rather have dashed my hand through my picture at once, than have left it in a good place while such a work as this was on the ground. No. 761, by the same hand, is a very remarkable drawing,

and the best study of sky that I can find this year; notable especially for its expression of the *consumption* of the clouds,—not their driving away, but melting away, in the warmer air. A third work, 566, apparently the most important of the three, is hung out of sight.

The writer of the judicious and interesting criticism which has this year given so beneficial a direction to the authority of the *Times*, in matters of art, has anticipated nearly all I had to say on the subject of Portraiture,[1] except in one particular. Some expressions in the paper of Wednesday last, respecting the tiresomeness of *conventional* backgrounds, might be construed by a hasty reader into general blame of *distinctness* or completion in backgrounds; and this was not, I believe, what the writer meant; certainly not what he ought to have meant. The accessaries of a portrait should be completely painted, both for the sake of their artistical use, and explanatory power. Distinctness and force of collateral masses are of the greatest use in relieving the more delicate gradations of colour in a well painted face; and the greatest portrait-painters, Titian, Veronese, Velasquez, and Raphael, introduce the most trenchant, clear, and complete backgrounds. Indeed the first three so rejoiced in quantity of accessaries, that, when engaged on important portraits, they would paint large historical pictures merely by way of illustration or introduction. The priceless Veronese, which I rejoice to hear has been just secured for the nation, the "Triumph of Alexander," was painted only to introduce portraits of the Pisani; and chiefly to set off to the best advantage the face of one fair girl. Generally speaking, if a painter is great, he will find his background serviceable in proportion to its space; and although, in modern portraiture, splendour of background is rarely possible or suitable, its *definiteness* should always be insisted upon; not only because it tends to make the manner of the work better throughout, but because accessaries, rightly designed,

[1] My notes on the pictures of Millais might also have been shortened, if I could have anticipated the careful analysis given in the *Times;* but as they were in corrected type before the appearance of the Wednesday's paper, I left them as they were written, the coincidence in the points chosen for animadversion being confirmatory of the justice of the independent criticisms.

are explanatory of character; and we like, or ought to like, better to see a man in whom we are interested, sitting in his favourite room and accustomed chair, than isolated among the sullen fogs or idle fancies of idealism.

I cannot speak of Architecture, as it would need the dwelling at length on almost inexplicable details; but I take leave to wish the good people of Halifax joy of their Town-hall (1073), that is to be, I hope, pleading only with Mr. Scott for a little interference of some sort with the lines of quatrefoils in its roof (1067); and I ought not to speak of Sculpture, because I have little pleasure in it when unconnected with architecture: so that I only go into the sculpture-room to look at my friends' works,—such as Mr. Munro's bust of Dr. Acland (1280), which I hope I am not wrong in thinking beautiful; or Mr. Woolner's medallion of Carlyle (1370), which I know I am not wrong in thinking like. It is much to be regretted that Mr. Woolner's highly wrought bust of Tennyson was not sent here instead of to Manchester, as we might then have compared in it, and in Mr. W. Brodie's (1354), two conceptions of the noble head, each containing elements which are wanting in the other.

But what a dark sign it is of the state of our architectural schools that there should never be seen in this room one example of sculpture applicable to external decoration, or subordinated to an architectural use!

SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS

There is a general character manifested in the pretty and richly decorated room of this Society, which appears to me deserving of some serious consideration before we take note of any of the drawings separately.

Here are three hundred and four drawings by forty-seven[1] painters, many of them elaborately finished, all showing that the artists have given their complete energy to them; and among the three hundred and four there is not *one* which expresses, or summons, a serious thought. There are, indeed, a few love passages, but they reach no farther than

[1] Why I say three hundred and four instead of three hundred and seventeen will appear presently.

an anxious look or a joyful hesitation. There are the children in the wood, shown by gaslight in the middle of moonlight; and there is a tearful pilgrim, with a superb scallop, and a staff which it is to be hoped, as he is an old man, that during most of his pilgrimage somebody else has carried for him. There is an angel under great difficulties in appearing to the shepherds, in consequence of their unanimously refusing to look at him: and there are two pretty fancies, of a peasant's return, in summer night, to his cottage among the deep corn; and a fisherman's, in stormy summer dawn, to his cottage on the shore. I think these are all that are so much as intended to be pathetic or suggestive.

Now there must be, of course, a certain proper and healthy demand in London, every spring, for pictures which mean nothing, just as there is for strawberries and asparagus. We do not want to be always philosophical, and may wisely ask for and enjoy a certain average number of paintings of roses and quinces, of showers and sunbeams, of beaches where we bathe, and glens where we shoot or clamber. All this is perfectly right and refreshing; nevertheless, a Society which takes upon itself, as its sole function, the supply of these mild demands of the British public, must be prepared ultimately to occupy a position much more corresponding to that of the firm of Fortnum and Mason, than to any hitherto held by a body of artists; and to find their art becoming essentially a kind of Potted Art, of an agreeable flavour, suppliable and taxable as a patented commodity, but in no wise to be thought of or criticised as *Living* Art. For living art, or art at all, properly so called, never has been, nor can be, developed in answer to a demand of this inferior kind; nor is it possible even for a simple landscape-painter to treat any of his simplest subjects worthily, unless, as he passes through the world, other things strike his eyes and fancy than the mere pleasantnesses of its outward aspect. Every form and colour bears new meaning to us, as soon as we begin to understand the greater purposes of life, and to feel the interest of its events. We may stand aside from both, set no hand to any but our own quiet work, pass our days in happy ramble or rest, sketch-book in hand, among the innocent glens and by the silent shores; but if, meantime, we are incapable of such reflection as shall make us

of this artist does not admit of his now devoting much labour to his pictures; and therefore that we ought not to class them among the other works as representative of *effort*, but rather as expressions of the feeling of a painter's mind at rest. Be this as it may, they form a complete exception to the general law of failure in sentiment, of which I have been speaking. They are deeply pathetic, and, as far as they reach, exquisitely harmonious in tone: the Caernarvon, in its warm grey walls and dark sea, and the Bolton Abbey,[1] in its melancholy glow of twilight, are strangely true and deeply felt. But there is not any other landscape which comes near these works of David Cox in simplicity or seriousness.

Perhaps the Highland scene, No. 11, by Richardson, may be taken as giving the clearest example of this fault in the work of a very clever artist. Mr. Richardson is gradually gaining in manual power, and opposes cobalt and burnt sienna very pleasantly. But he seems always to conceive a Highland landscape only as a rich medley of the same materials—a rocky bank, blue at one place and brown at another; some contorted Scotch firs, some fern, some dogs, and some sportsmen: the whole contemplated under the cheering influence of champagne, and considered every way delightful. The Highlands *are* delightful, but, for the most part, in another way than this. I do not regret that Mr. Richardson has given this one reading of them, the reading that pleasantly occurs to an active youth in his long vacation; but there ought to be, on the walls, the other readings, too, of those desolate glens, with the dark-brown torrents surging monotonously among their lower rocks, cutting them into the cup-like pools where the deep stream eddies like black oil, and the moth, fallen weary out of the wind on its surface, circles round and round, struggling vainly; of the little spaces under the fern where the glen widens, and the sward is smooth as if for knights' lists, and sweet as if for dancing of fairies' feet, and lonely as if it grew over an enchanted grave; of those low alder thickets, set in soft shade where the stream is broad by the stepping-stones—the drowned lamb lying on the bank, under their stooping

[1] No. 299. The degree of light and warmth obtained on the ruins by the use of subdued colour is by much the most instructive thing, to me, in the exhibition.

leaves, since the last flood; of those sweet winding paths through the oat-fields, and under the ash-trees, where the air breathes so softly when the berries are blush-scarlet in the setting sun, and more softly still when the cold, clear, northern light dies over the purple ranges jagged and wild. Are not these seen everywhere? and seen day by day, and yet never thought upon; felt, I believe, more at his heart by the half-starved shepherd boy than by the skilfullest of our painters. And I am the more sorry that Mr. Richardson does not yet feel the expression in Highland scenery, because I think there may be traced considerable power of composition in the passages of these distant hills; and the large piece of rock on the left is very nearly well drawn: in fact, the old established system of taking out triangles of light and laying on sharp edges of darkness has been nearly perfected by Mr. Richardson, and does so much more in his hands than most other people's, that if he ever determines to draw in a pure and right way, I should think he would reach far. He seems to have a good eye for colour—there is a very pretty piece of speckled grey in the square rock on the right at the bottom—but he is not at the slightest trouble to fit the colours of shadows to the lights, or of dark sides to light sides; and his ungrammatical brilliancy will therefore always look only like what it is—very pretty warm colour, but never like sunshine. It is worth while to stand midway between the screens on this side of the room, and look alternately from this drawing to Mr. Fripp's (37), which is very true in relations of sun and shadow colour. Mr. Richardson's will perhaps, even after many glances, be thought the prettier drawing; but only in Mr. Fripp's will be seen the Highland sun and air.

And Mr. Richardson is the less to be excused for not entering completely into Highland character, because he can enter into no other. He has fallen so passively into the habit of drawing rocks in sharp angles, and a wild litter of fern and grass among them, that he can compose a landscape of no other materials; and we find "Catanzaro, the capital of Calabria" (94), looking like a number of models of Italian buildings, erected by some imaginative Highland proprietor in Ross-shire.

18. Cornfield, near Hastings. (*C. Davidson.*)

Very true and modest; as are all Mr. Davidson's works.

His companion picture (39) gives me a great desire to go haymaking in Sussex this summer. What a lovely field that must be!

37. Scene at the Head of Glencoe. (*G. Fripp.*)

This drawing has just missed being an exceedingly fine one: the glow of red light on the hills on the right is perfectly imagined; the slightest more gradation in it, and a purer touch or two at the brightest part, would have brought it into great beauty. The cows are individually stiff, but excellently put in place. The whole is full of genuine work, and real look of Highlands.

126. "On the Derwent" is also very warm with sweet sunshine; but Mr. Fripp lets his colours get awkwardly entangled at the edges among his distant hills. He ought to use them much more neatly, and keep them purer, and draw more carefully. His *aim* in drawing is very right indeed; the rock structure in those Glencoe masses being quite true, only messed a little in the working.

45. Val St. Nicolas. (*J. D. Harding.*)

I am glad to see the works of this master again in this room; but they do not look quite so distinct from the rest as they used to be: they are, if I mistake not, looser and flatter in touch than in old times. This is a clever drawing; but Mr. Harding need not hope to draw Switzerland on these cheap terms. The flanks of the Alps are by no means films of blue colour, but very substantial and sturdy masses of chestnuts and walnuts, of cornfields and vineyards, of black pines and green meadows; all positively declaring themselves for pines, walnuts, corn, and grass, and requiring as such to be drawn; on peril, otherwise, of instant loss both of character in the nearer scene, and of height in the peaks beyond. If you hide the upper range of mountains in this drawing with your hand, you will find the lower one forms a very satisfactory distance: as such, the superimposed hills merely dwarf and encumber *it;* while, had it been drawn with its true detail, it would, on the contrary, have exalted *them.*

57. Glenarm, County Antrim. (*H. Gastineau.*)

There is a great deal of daylight and air in this picture; and Mr. Gastineau's work is taking at present rather a peculiar position on the walls, as almost alone representative of the old pure water-colour painting, executed without

much subsequent sponging for texture, or body-colour washes and dashes. This drawing, as well as the more vigorous "St. Maurice," is very pure in execution, and has in consequence a pleasant unaffected character not otherwise attainable.

61. Sunset. Winter: A Black Frost. (*C. Branwhite.*)

This painter has, for some time back, shown considerable ability; but he must not hope to reach any sterling qualities without much closer study of nature. It is really high time, considering how many treatises are written on perspective and optics, that our painters should understand, once for all, the difference between shadows and reflections; and that as some five or six hundred pictures of pretension are painted annually with reflection of sun or moon in water, it should be generally understood that the reflection of the sun does not radiate, any more than that of a white ball or a white wafer radiates; but that it is either a circle (in *absolutely* calm water), an oval, more or less elongated (in partly disturbed water), or, under certain circumstances, especially when the sun is low, a vertical pillar, more or less broken; each of these images spreading in flakes to right and left when there is much agitation in the water, but always rather narrowing than widening to the spectator's feet.

64. One of Nature's Ferneries. (*P. J. Naftel.*)

It looks like a true portrait of a beautiful spot, almost tropical or antediluvian in its ferny richness; and both this and Mr. Naftel's other drawings seem wrought with a real love of Nature, and a pleasant sense of daylight colour, without any affectation or desire to attract attention by trickeries. But I think Mr. Naftel has yet to do some massy and stern work in light and shade, and to discipline himself in point-drawing, before he will be able to express himself as he would like to do, and may do.

The two subjects, 64 and 96, are exquisitely pretty; but I believe it will be generally found that no *merely* pretty place is fit for pictorial treatment. Into all good subjects for painters' work, either human feeling must enter by some evidence of cultivation, or presence of dwelling-place, or of ruin; or else there must be some sublime features indicative of the distress as well as the beauty of Nature. I think

this law admits of no exception, but I have not space here to explain or apply it.

130. Faust's First Sight of Margaret. (*F. W. Burton.*)

I am at a loss to know why this picture is in a central position; it possesses no special merit of any kind. The face of Margaret is pretty, but wholly untouched by the feeling which prompts her first sharp answer: "I am neither a lady, nor pretty, and can go home by myself." For the rest, it is simply a stage dress and a stage stride; and the colouring is more false and crude than that of almost any picture in the room. The red of the cloak, for instance, is daubed about at random, coming bright in the shadow or dirty in the light, as chance will have it. I entirely dislike Faust, and am sick of illustrations of it; but I wonder whether any painter will ever do it so much justice as to represent Mephistopheles with the face of a man who could either tempt or deceive.

211, 222. Welsh Bridge and Torrent. (*G. Dodgson.*)

I like Mr. Dodgson's sketches (they hardly claim to be more) better than *any* landscape work here, David Cox's only excepted. There is very great perception of colour in them, and evidently entire fidelity to his subject. The stream in 222 is the only genuine piece of torrent-drawing in the exhibition; all the rest are done by recipe, so much scratch and so much dash; this is a hard and steady try at a real stream in flood. Mr. Dodgson's fern-drawing, too, is much more subtle than any one else's; his ferns are not merely green central rods, with so many green arms on each side, but real, crisped, quaint, varied leaves, with personal character in them. Still his work only reaches a certain length, and he seems quite careless in choice of subject. I hope he will some day choose more scrupulously, and finish more carefully.

217, 244. (*F. W. Topham.*)

The delicate feeling and expression in these two drawings induce me to hope that Mr. Topham may produce works of sterling quality if he continue to aim at points of character. As paintings, both are somewhat thin and incomplete, being too much wrought with broad flat washes; very good things for grounds, but wholly incapable of producing any right result without severe drawing above

them. The girl's head in 217 is, however, very pretty, and satisfactorily finished.

302. Hareem Life. (*J. F. Lewis.*)

Though this drawing represents but a small portion of the year's labour of the master (it being only through untoward chance that it has no companion), it may give rise to some serious question how far the conscientiousness of completion ought to be allowed to extend. I know well that Lewis could not have satisfied himself with less than the exquisite accomplishment of every detail which he has given us here; nay, I know that he is not satisfied even with what he has given, and would forbid me that word "accomplishment," if he saw it being written. But it seems to me questionable how far he ought to consult his own satisfaction; still more questionable whether so much invention, toil, intensity of observation and of mechanical skill, should be trusted to one poor little piece of white linen film, fifteen inches square. If water-colour were infusible enamel, if the ground were a thick plate of beaten gold, if the English public were ready to receive a noble picture as a rich treasure, and take the charge of it as a weighty trust, we might reasonably ask Mr. Lewis to finish his work with his full strength, and make it right, at any cost. But now, when the mildew of winter and sunshine of summer, the city's smoke and country's frost, are alike sure to do fatal work, within a very short series of years, on the plurality of works executed in these delicate materials, and either exposed to the dusty honours of modern exhibitions, or condemned to the humid seclusion of the drawing-room when the family are "out of town," it seems to me mere waste of intellect to bestow so much labour on a single drawing. Surely the chances of safety, such as they are, might be multiplied; and six or seven drawings of less elaborate but equally admirable execution might at once educate the public eye by their diffusion, and fall, perhaps, one or two out of the six, into the possession of persons who would seriously value and safely guard them. No one is less disposed than I to advocate any loose or sketchy methods of painting; but there is a firm, adequate, and manly execution, such as that adopted by the Venetian painters when they were in a hurry, which, while expressing a perfect conception of the finished object, and reaching as

deep and substantial colour as more elaborate work, yet attains its ends at once with a magician's speed and a wise steward's economy. The practice of such modes of expression has great tendency to enlarge the range of thought, and give majesty to its tones: for there is something elevating in the very habit of scorning our own work; and, frequently, grander things were done by Titian or Giorgione when they were filling a spare panel in a corner of a refectory, or colouring, half in play, the bit of plaster left between two ugly window-sills of a friend's house, than when they were bringing all their science and skill to bear on some beloved design in their painting-rooms.

And there is this further advantage about a rough piece of work, that time, or chance injury, cannot so grievously affect it as they can a more delicate one. Nothing is so painful as to see what has once been exquisitely complete, become spotted, or scratched, or faded. But a rough chalk sketch, or a bold and massively cast fresco, will bear many a stain and scar, and fail in many a flake of colour, without materially losing its power over our minds. If the slightest spot or injury touched the trelliswork and drapery in Lewis's pictures, no one would ever be able to look at them again till they had been "restored"; and still less, after such restoration, any one who knew the master's work.

In the case of Lewis there is this further reason for pleading for quicker work, that his invention and power over character are more distinctive even than his subtle execution. Van Eyck realised pure detail quite up to the mark of this picture, and in passages needing air tone, or transparency of darkness, considerably further; but Van Eyck could not arrange masses of drapery as these are arranged, still less could he have given all her tigerish strength and cruel waywardness to the couchant cat, or laid in the same grace of languid opalescence the filaments of the peacock's plume. But all this might have been done, and done quite as greatly, in three days instead of three months; and perhaps a higher kind of excellence generally reached by the master, if he thought now more of arrangement and character than of absolute finish. He can never, after bringing himself up to this perfectness, paint carelessly or slightly; but there *is* a chance of his losing the great harmonies of his compositions, and even some of his power over the expression

of human features, if he spends too much time on golden fringes and wall mosaics.

I believe the face of the principal figure in this picture is unfinished; at all events, I am quite sure the master will see cause for altering it after his eye has been turned for a little while to other subjects. Both the faces are too grey, and this one is somewhat wanting in retiring shadow, and in distinctness of the sides, so that it looks flat. The cat is wholly magnificent in action, but not quite furry or silky enough in her coat. She looks as if she had put pomade on her fur.

NEW SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS

There is more sincerity of aim, now, in this body of artists than in the elder Society; though a sincerity which shows itself chiefly in the way which is least interesting—in mere studies and sketches from nature, not in landscape design nor in figure pieces, so that it is impossible to take note of all the simple though meritorious drawings which have been produced by them this year without wearying the reader by mere repetitions of quiet praise. I can only allow myself the pleasure of referring to one or two principal or characteristic works. I will not go formally round the room, but name them as I remember them.

152. At Pallanza. (*T. L. Rowbotham.*)

Without bringing forward this drawing as in anywise an example of great art, it yet possesses one character which distinguishes it, to my mind, very honourably from many by masters of more power or pretension. I think Mr. Rowbotham loves the Lago Maggiore, and was thinking of Lago Maggiore and not of himself all the while he was painting. If he makes the blue of the water a little too bright, or the draperies of the houses too gay, it is not so much to make his picture conspicuous, as to reach, if by any means he may, the standard of his own memories of the lovely lake and shining village. And I think this a precious character in work, while it is also a rarer one than we imagine; for it is quite possible to be much more faithful

to natural detail than Mr. Rowbotham is, and yet to be faithful only in pride, for the sake of showing how accurate we can be; and then the accuracy, somehow or another, always becomes of no use. It is also quite possible to paint on better principles than Mr. Rowbotham does, and yet to care for nothing but principles all the while; whereas I see plainly that this artist does at heart care chiefly for the misty mountains and the deep lake, and is trying to make us care for them too. Which I think, also, he succeeds in doing very sufficiently. This is very like Pallanza, though it is not everybody who will believe that it is; but Italian lakes are indeed as blue, Italian towers in morning sunshine as white, as these; and when I said just now the blue was too bright, I did not mean it was too pure, but that it was not dark enough. Another time, if Mr. Rowbotham will carry his pier a little deeper down into the water, and show the stones more darkly beneath the increasing blue, he will find the effect is truer; though very good even now. Note the two floating bits of wood at the shallow edge, and the three ranges of the shore-cast weed and shingle—not tide-marks, but evidences that the south-west wind blew warm with rain on the St. Gothard a few days ago, raising the lake's level with soft melting of snow, from which level it has ebbed a little since in these sunny mornings.

Mr. Rowbotham would do well, however, to study the laws of reflection in coloured water more than he has hitherto. They are very curious and subtle; and it is quite absurd not to ascertain them, for he has nothing to do but to dissolve a little Prussian blue in water in a white basin, and set a few rose leaves, and tulip leaves, and sticks floating in it, and he may study every change in hue and fantasy of reflection at his ease; afterwards applying the principles he thus ascertains to his boats, and oars, and awnings.

285. The Kabyle Mountains at Sunset. (*Charles Vacher.*)

The rocks and aloe on the left are very beautifully drawn, the tone of the distant mountains most true, and all the effects more delicately felt than hitherto in this painter's work. He bids fair to occupy a separate field in the painting of evening light (compare Nos. 15, 217, &c.), corresponding closely to that which was once occupied

by George Robson. But Mr. Vacher should not draw figures; they will waste his time, and distract his attention from parts of his subjects in which he succeeds better.

134. The Upper Wye. (*Thomas Lindsay.*)

This I remember, because the piece of river bed is so quaintly chosen—so different from anything which sketchers usually stay at. It would be a most poetical subject if well carried out; but Mr. Lindsay's skill is not quite up to the need.

103. Trebarwith Sands. (*S. Cook.*)

Mr. Cook has a very fine eye for colour, and great understanding of sea. I like all his drawings exceedingly. This seems on the whole the leading one, the rosy sunlight opposing the strength of the green waves very beautifully.

201. San Clemente, Venice.

Not a very good drawing, but it stays in my memory because it *is* like Venice; and any such likeness is the most difficult thing in the world to find, for Venice always unsettles painters' wits: no place was ever so fit to be painted truly, or so fated to be painted falsely.

190. Early Spring. (*Thomas Sutcliffe.*)

Compare 197. Both are very earnest studies; but only to be considered as such, and of too difficult subjects to be quite successful in Mr. Sutcliffe's present stage of power. When a young painter first goes to Nature, he is sure to be charmed by her intricacy in far-away places; and he sets himself to paint what he likes best, not what is best for him. The simpler his choice the better—the door of a cottage, or a rose-bush in its garden, rather than the opening of a glen, or the aisle of a forest.

SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

It would of course be useless to enter into separate examination of the works produced by this Society at the time when the interest of the public is concentrated on other exhibitions. I sincerely regret this, for many of the drawings which I have had occasion to notice above are entirely inferior in skill, and works of very slight interest or power, compared to the oil paintings in Suffolk Street. Still I should vainly endeavour now to attract attention to

them, and can only therefore allude, gratefully for my own part, to the elaborate studies of clear streams and rocky mountains by Mr. Boddington, Mr. Pettitt, and Mr. West. The Nos. 158, 195, 223, 346, 347, 351, and 561 were all full of interest and high in merit; the rock-drawing peculiarly good and careful. I had not time to examine them carefully enough to justify me in assigning precedences; only I may say that I liked the last best, for its quiet colour and beautiful setting of the trees on the distant hill-sides, as well as the delight evidently felt by the painter in the clearness of the water.

153. "Il Ritorno della Contadina" (*E. Eagles*) was most carefully balanced in tone, and successful in its effect of light—and pretty in thought. Two studies by Mr. Smallfield (737, "Little Peggy," and 760, "An Itinerant Shoeblack") showed very great feeling, and, I hope, promise of high power; and "A Bird's Nest," by Mr. W. Ward (76), was by much the most wonderful example of Dutch sharpness and minuteness of execution that I have seen this year; only Mr. Ward must aim more at getting true relations of shade in his large masses: he loses himself in detail.

In the British Institution I cannot forget the marvellous effect of light on snow, and the truthful drawing of its wreaths and icicles, in Mr. Wolf's "Covey" (255). The effect, however, was greatly dependent on distance, and could hardly be seen in the narrow room.

FRENCH EXHIBITION

I do not like to speak much of the French Exhibition, because there are characters in the work of every nation which need to be long and specially studied before a foreigner can do justice to them; and I have not yet been able to give serious study to the French modern school. Two things, however, must strike every one: the general deadness of colour, associated with softness of outline, which seem to be enforced upon their feeble painters, and delighted in by their stronger ones. I had intended to try to get at the principle of this, to consider what harm or good was in it; but I have been hindered hitherto, and see

no hope of my ever getting liberty in that room to think of, or look at, anything but the six pictures of Edouard Frère. There are, I see well enough, one or two consummate pieces by other men: the "Doctor's Visit" (136), for instance, by Emile Plassan, is as perfect and finished as work or thought can well be; and Trayer's "Convalescent" (155), and several other such, show, in various degrees, a peculiar ease in getting at their point, which makes our English efforts, however successful, look clumsy and forced by comparison. But I cannot tell how I am ever to say what I want to say about Frère's pictures; I can find no words tender enough nor reverent enough. They have all beauty, without consciousness; dignity, without pride; lowliness, without sorrow; and religion, without fear. Severe in fidelity, yet, as if by an angel's presence, banishing all evil and pain; perfect in power, yet seeming to reach his purpose in a sweet feebleness, his hand failing him for fulness of heart; swift to seize the passing thought of a moment in a child's spirit, as a summer wind catches a dead rose-leaf before it falls, yet breathing around it the everlasting peace of heaven;—he will do more for his country if he can lead her to look where he looks, and to love as he loves, than all the proud painters who ever gave lustre to her state or endurance to her glory. What truer glory has she than in these her village children? I cannot choose among such pictures, nor reason of them, though, perhaps, the reader may be surprised at my caring so much for what seems slight in work and poor in colour. But its very poverty and slightness are, in some sort, a part of its beauty: at least, if this painting be imperfect, I have never seen perfect painting do so much; and I believe that only the man who can conceive these pictures knows how he ought to paint them. The beautiful "Student" (61) is, perhaps, the most finished, just because it is the least pathetic; the three other more important ones, the "Luncheon," the "Sempstress," and the "Prayer," are certainly three of the most touching poems that were ever yet written, and, I believe, by far the most lovely ever yet painted, of lowly life. Who could have believed that it was possible to unite the depth of Wordsworth, the grace of Reynolds, and the holiness of Angelico?

The first named of these pictures is the most wonderful;

but perhaps the "Prayer" is the one which will be most easily understood, and will best teach the spectator how to enter into the character of the rest. It needs no telling of it; surely it will speak for itself:—the little bare feet kept from the stone-cold by the nightgown which the mother has folded for them, bared of their rough grey stockings, as reverently and as surely in God's presence as if the poor cottage floor were the rock of Sinai; the close cap over the sweet, pointed, playful, waving hair, which the field-winds have tossed and troubled as they do the long meadow-grass in May, and yet have not unsmoothed one wave of its silken balm, nor vexed with rude entangling one fair thread of all that her God numbers day by day; the dear, bowed, patient face, and hands folded, and the mother's love that clasps them close in a solemn awe, lest they should part or move before her Father's blessing had been given in fulness. Return to it, and still return. It should be the last picture you look at in all the year; carrying the memory of it with you far away through the silence of the thatched villages, and the voices of the blossoming fields.

NOTES ON SOME OF

THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES

EXHIBITED IN THE ROOMS OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY

THE OLD AND NEW

SOCIETIES OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS

THE SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

AND THE FRENCH EXHIBITION.

No. IV.—1858

PREFACE

In a temperate and candid critique which appeared last year in the *Economist*, and expressed, as I have since found, the feelings of many readers respecting this publication, complaint was made of its imperfection as a record of the art of the season; and it was truly alleged that many pictures of merit were passed without notice, and many of demerit without blame. But the writer surely could not have considered what would be involved in an endeavour to give a complete account of the exhibitions of the year. If there is any truly original power in a picture—nay, if it shows even any considerable quantity of good work and effort, it takes me at least half an hour to form judgment of it; and if it is a *great* picture, I want the half-hour twice or three times over on different days; and the time so spent is laboriously spent—in finding out as far as I can, first, what the painter is trying for, then in comparing his way of trying for it with this and the other condition of art already existing, and considering what likelihoods of success or error are involved in his present mode of work: determining not so much what the real facts are about the picture, which I can generally tell pretty soon, as how many of those facts the painter or the public ought to be told. Often a picture of merit is passed without notice, because it has heavy faults which, if I spoke of it at all, it would be necessary to point out in a way which might discourage and harm the painter more than the idea that his picture had been overlooked by chance. Often pictures of great demerit are passed silently, because there is no hope for their painters, and the kind of error they have fallen into may be pointed out quite as usefully in other cases, without multiplying offence. Sometimes I pass over names of great reputation, because my estimate of their work is in opposition so direct to the public estimate of it that such influence as I might otherwise possess would only be weakened by expressing it; and sometimes I permit myself silence about personal friends who are doing the public little harm by their pictures, and whose friendship I should be

sorry to lose. But the real and chief reason for my not speaking of such and such pictures is my not having had time to look at them. This pamphlet must, if it is to be useful, be printed within seven or eight days after the opening. Two of those days are needed for press correction and binding; five remain: that is to say—three for looking and two for writing. I can neither look nor write for more than eight hours a day; which, allowing an average of a quarter of an hour to each picture, enables me even to *look* at no more than a hundred out of the thousand in the Açademy; and the first choice of this hundred, out of which those to be written of must be finally chosen, of course depends, in some degree, on accident: the eye is often caught by something bright or energetic, with semblances of right, and it takes a minute or two to make quite sure there is nothing in it—and many minutes in the aggregate are thus lost; or a noble and quiet picture may have got entangled in a company so contemptible that one passes it in a fit of indignation about its neighbours. But all this is unavoidable—nor is it to be regretted. It is precisely this losing sight here and there of a really good picture which permits me to lose sight also of the bad ones, when it is desirable to do so—nobody knowing whether the picture has been disliked or overlooked. Take the pamphlet simply for what I stated it to be, in the preface to the first that was issued—a circular letter to my friends about the pictures that most interest me in my first glance at the exhibition—and it will be found serviceable; view it in any other light, and it will be wholly inefficient. Its value consists only in being trustworthy as far as it reaches; and guiding safely, though not guiding everywhere. I trust that I shall not often overlook any truly great and consummate picture; but it is better to lose sight of ten than to pass false judgment on one; and I strive so to look and so to write, that the repentances which must necessarily follow all hurried work may be of my silences only—not of my words.

NOTES

&c., &c.

EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

The Academy walls present us this year with much matter for curious speculation, or rather for careful and earnest forecasting of the probable course of our schools of art in this their transitional stage of effort. Accidentally, there are no leading pictures, and the rooms are filled with more or less successful works by the disciples of the Pre-Raphaelite school, which, as I stated five years ago it would,[1] has entirely prevailed against all opposition; sweeping away in its strong current many of the opposers themselves, whirling them hither and thither, for the moment, in its eddies, without giving them time to strike out; and tearing down in its victory a few useful old landmarks, which we shall have to build up again by and bye. But the main question forced upon our thoughts this year is the result of the new modes of study on minds of average, or inferior power. For what was done in the first instance by men of singular genius, under intense conditions of mental excitement, is now done, partly as a quiet duty, partly in compliance with the prevalent fashion, by men of ordinary powers in ordinary tempers—resulting, of course, not in brilliant, but only in worthy and satisfactory work; respecting which commonplace completeness there are several points of interest for our consideration. For a year or two considerable disappointment may be felt by the disciples of the new school. Conscious in themselves of an entire change in their modes of thought, and a vigorous advance in powers both of sight and execution, they will be necessarily mortified to find that the advance is unrewarded by distinction; that their pictures, which before were unnoticed in the midst of others as wrong, are now unnoticed in the midst of others as right; and that

[1] Edinburgh Lectures, p. 171.

they have become no more conspicuous in reformation than they were in heresy. There is, however, this comfort for them (without counting the comfort in the mere consciousness of being right, whether noticed or not), that the kind of painting which they now practise is capable of far more extended appeal to the popular mind. The old art of trick and tradition had no language but for the connoisseur; this natural art speaks to all men: around it daily the circles of sympathy will enlarge; pictures will become gradually as necessary to domestic life as books; they will be largely bought—though little wondered at; the painter will have to content himself with being as undistinguished as an author, and must be satisfied in this unpraised usefulness.

Secondly. The pictures of the rising school will in a few years be much more interesting than they are now. In learning to work carefully from nature, everybody has been obliged to paint what will stay to be painted; and the best of nature will not wait. Moreover, a subject which must be returned to every day for a couple of months must necessarily be near the house door; and artists cannot always have their lodgings where they choose; many of them, unable to quit their usual residences, must paint the best thing they can find in their neighbourhood; and this best accessible bit, however good as a study—(anything will do for that)—will usually be uninteresting to the public. The evil is increased by affectations of Wordsworthian simplicity; also by a good deal of genuine simplicity; and of more or less foolish sentiment. Formerly, when people were forced to draw by rule, and were never allowed either to think or feel, we were at least untroubled by foolish thoughts and weak feelings; now, when the rage is for sentiment, and everybody is encouraged to tell us all that is in or near their hearts, we must not be surprised to find that naïveté may sometimes be tiresome as well as formalism; and the exaggeration of sensibility as offensive as the pedantry of science. The compensation is in this case greater than the evil: we are sure that whatever thoughts or passions truly possess the painter, will be truly expressed by him; while in old times they would have been silenced or constrained. The extent of these two adverse influences, however, is curiously shown in the present Academy. Because it is necessary to paint on successive days from the same object,

in order to realise it to perfection, we have hardly a single interesting sky in the whole gallery;—Mr. Dillon's sunset on the Nile (273), and Mr. Cooke's at Venice (577) are almost the only pictures of merit which acknowledge the existence of clouds as a matter of serious interest; and because the humblest subjects are pathetic when Pre-Raphaelitically rendered, the two pieces most representative of the school in the rooms are both of stonebreakers: one (Mr. Brett's), of a boy hard at work on his heap in the morning, and the other (Mr. Wallis's), of an old man dead on his heap at night. Taking which facts in their full significance, it is pleasant to think what this new school of ours will do when it once gets fairly to work on materials worth its while. Here we have literally only experiments and early lessons: trials of strength on fragments of landscape in serene weather; quiet little millstreams and corners of meadows, slopes of sand hills, farmyard gates, blackberry hedges, and clumps of furze. But what shall we say when the power of painting, which makes even these so interesting, begins to exert itself, with the aid of imagination and memory, on the splendid transience of nature, and her noblest continuance; when we have the courses of heaven's golden clouds instead of squares of blue through cottage casements; and the fair river mists, and mountain shrouds of vapour instead of cottage smoke;—pine forests as well as banks of grass, and fallen precipices instead of heaps of flints. All this is yet to come; nay, even the best of the quiet, accessible, simple gifts of nature are yet to come. How strange that among all this painting of delicate detail, there is not a true one of English spring!—that no Pre-Raphaelite has painted a cherry-tree in blossom, dark-white against the twilight of April; nor an almond-tree rosy on the blue sky; nor the flush of the apple-blossom, nor a blackthorn hedge, nor a wildrose hedge; nor a bank with crown-circlets of the white nettle; nor a wood-ground of hyacinths;[1] no, nor even heather, and such things of which we talk continually. Nobody has ever painted heather yet, nor a rock spotted richly

[1] That is to say, so as to bring out their beauty for a principal subject. Mr. Inchbold painted some wood hyacinths and gentians, but too few, and half hidden in a litter of other flowers. Mr. Oakes painted a beautiful lichened rock, but obscured with furze and rubbish—not brought out in its power.

with mosses; nor gentians, nor Alpine roses, nor white oxalis in the woods, nor anemone nemorosa, nor even so much as the first springing leaves of any tree in their pale, dispersed delicate sharpness of shape. Everything has to be done yet; and we must not think quite so much of ourselves till we have done it, even though we have got to be so profoundly moral that we make everybody who looks at our work the wiser for it. We must take care not always to make them sadder also. Indeed, I look with deep respect and delight on the steady purpose of doing good, which has thus in a few years changed the spirit of our pictures, and turned most of them into a sort of sermons;—only let it always be remembered that it is much easier to be didactic than to be lovely, and that it is sometimes desirable to excite the joy of the spectator as well as his indignation.

What, however, I have to say this year of particular pictures will cast itself, to my regret, a little into the form of carping; for now that nearly all are careful and well-intended, there is no possibility of praising the universal care, or describing the universal intention: while, on the other hand, there are no leading pictures of the class that silence fault-finding; but several which just miss of being leading pictures, owing to faults which it therefore becomes a duty to find. I hope it will be understood that in my statement of these blemishes, I do not in general fix upon them because the picture in question has more faults than others, but because its merits make them more to be regretted.

18. Old Holland. (*C. Stanfield, R.A.*)

Certainly there is no cause for regret here; Mr. Stanfield never painted a more delightful picture, or one showing more of his peculiar power. The fish are unusually beautiful both in line and colour.

29. The Bluidy Tryste. (*J. N. Paton.*)

I regret the prevailing gloom which at present characterises this artist's work; art may face horror, but should not dwell with it. The greatest painters habitually have chosen cheerful, or serene subjects; and if Mr. Paton will paint them more frequently, he would feel the real power of a frightful one more, when there is need for him to paint it. There, was, I believe, such need in the case of his other picture, "In Memoriam," it having been designed at the time of the fit of miserable public weakness which had like

to have checked the doing of judgment and justice on the Indian murderers; but there was no need, as far as I can see, or feel, for the defilement of this sweet dell with guilt; at least, unless it had been done more solemnly. The dead body is far too well dressed; no one can be sorry that there is an end of the coxcomb; he might have been far more gallantly dressed for his tryst without being so fine. Then Nature ought to have had more observance of him—the sun ought to have fallen here and there upon his face—yes, and upon his blood; and the hue of the leafage round him should have had, it seems to me, the deep sympathy through all its innocent life which is felt in those words of Keats—

> "Saying, moreover, Isabel, my sweet,
> Red whortle-berries droop above my head,
> And a large flint stone weighs upon my feet.
> Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed
> Their leaves and prickly nuts: a sheepfold bleat
> Comes from beyond the river to my bed."

Many readers thought it a mere piece of flippancy when I said, respecting Mr. Paton's beautiful picture of the "Home," that he ought to paint nothing for some time to come but apricots and peaches. It was, on the contrary, a quiet statement of a true necessity. Mr. Paton will not learn what is wanting to his mode of painting until he practises colour from simple objects, in the realisation of which emotion can have no share. This foreground is, of course, painted with intensest care, and perfect draughtsmanship; there is more natural history in it than in most others in the rooms: the little pinguicula alpina on the left, the oxalis leaves in the middle, the red ferns, and small red viper on the right, are all exquisitely articulated as far as form goes; but they are painted without enough mystery or change of colour. It will be necessary for this painter to make colour his main object for some months, and to paint the leaves thoroughly well on a large scale before he reduces them to foreground magnitude; but the way he has executed the girdles of the two figures, the piece of bank above the knight's head, and that just under his breast, between it and the bugle, proves him to be capable of all perfection.

59. Fairy Tales. (*W. C. T. Dobson.*)

It would be difficult to improve the sweet earnestness of the little face; or the conception of the whole attitude. I

merely pay tribute of admiration in passing, having had my say about Mr. Dobson's colour before. His larger picture, 446, is very interesting in the new conception of Ishmael; the boy, against whom was to be the hand of all men, kissing his father's hand, and receiving his blessing. What a difference between this and the vile Guercino of Milan, in which Abraham scolds them out of the tent—Hagar crying because she has no chance of another "place."

But Mr. Dobson is, I think, wrong in his idea of Sarah. She may, indeed, for all that is recorded of her, have been a hard and commonplace woman: but there was nothing in her sending away Hagar at this time to prove that she was, and it would have been nobler to have conceived her as more sorrowful, and hesitating in her cruelty.

79. Athaliah's Dismay, &c. (*S. H. Hart, R.A.*)

I fear I must leave this, and its correspondent picture of the "high art" school, Mr. Poole's Lear (310), to the admiration of the *Athenæum*, which, with great felicity of expression, declares the Lear to be under a "gloating, delicious light," and the Athaliah to be "of the highest order of Jezebel beauty." Jezebel's beauty, however, needed some painting before she tried its effect when her life hung upon it, and I fear that Athaliah's beauty must have stood in need of some such help at this period of her age. Has Mr. Hart actually painted this large picture without inquiring how old the queen or her grandson were? or does he seriously mean the figure of Joash to represent a boy only seven years old; and that of the Queen to represent a wicked Eastern woman of seven or eight and forty,—for Athaliah could not be less—her son was three and twenty when the arrows of Jehu overtook him by Ibleam, seven years before. But the *Athenæum* is too severe upon Mr. Hart, in its observation that "the dull vacant face of Joab is rather a blot;" for, as Joab at this time had been dead just a hundred and forty-two years, it was likely his face would be vacant.

101. A Kibab Shop, Scutari. (*J. F. Lewis.*)

My first impression is that this very notable picture shows the labour in it too clearly, but I cannot judge of it in haste. The animal life is nearly perfect; the kid making up its mind to butt the pigeons is especially delightful. 122, however, is a more consummate example of the painter's work;

and 245, though at first it looks uninteresting, will be found very wonderful on quiet examination. His gift of grace in arrangement of line is best seen in the fall of the red drapery of No. 51. But I hardly know what is the matter with me this year, for I find Mr. Paton's pictures too dramatic, and Mr. Lewis's not dramatic enough. He has thirty-one figures in all, upon the walls, and all the drama to be got out of the whole number is the arrangement of a nosegay and the presentation of a cup of coffee. Perhaps those who delight in the gloomier pictures of the present exhibition may be able to excite themselves into some interest in this last event, by supposing the coffee to be poisoned.

There is, however, one point which ought specially to be noted respecting Lewis's work—it is always and wholly original. When, some time ago, I claimed him as a Pre-Raphaelite, I never meant that he had been influenced in his practice by any of the other members of that school; but that he was associated with it, as ten years ago I showed that Turner was, and as all true painters for ever must be, by the mere fact of their painting truth instead of formalism or idealism; while Lewis is still more closely connected with the present nominal masters of the school by his completeness of finish to the utmost corners of his canvas. But he was not led to this finishing by Hunt or Rossetti. There never, perhaps, in the history of art was work so wholly independent as Lewis's. He worked with the sternest precision twenty years ago, when Pre-Raphaelitism had never been heard of;—pursued calmly the same principles, developed by himself, for himself, in the midst of all adverse influences in Rome, and through years of lonely labour in Syria. In all those years of Eastern light, he wrought with Nature only for his master: he cannot have seen so much as one good picture from the time of his leaving Rome until his return to England. And all our discoveries here, and all our talking and quarrelling about them, have been nothing to John Lewis—as they were nothing to Turner. There is not another picture in all this Academy which I believe to have been painted wholly without reference to the Pre-Raphaelite dogmas. They are either directly or distantly imitative; either cautiously recusant or vigorously defiant; but John Lewis paints as he would have painted had no such school, no such dogmas, ever existed; and that girl

would still have been there, and she would still have had the same exquisite glow in her face—the same delicate light in her eyes—and the same finished tracery of gold on her robe—though Pre-Raphaelitism had been strangled ten years ago in its birth, and all the painters in Europe had now been daubing like Haydon or Benjamin West.

119. Sunday Evening. (*T. Webster, R.A.*)

Mr. Webster is quite delightful both in this picture and 334. I never remember seeing the expression of a child at once full of affection and mischief, so delicately and perfectly touched as in this little disturber; one sees so well that the house never can be quiet for her, except when she is asleep; and holds no other joy so dear as that disquiet.

200. The Maid of Derwent. (*H. H. Emerson.*)

A promising average example of the kind of study from nature which fills the rooms, and of which it is impossible to mark the other instances specially. This is better balanced in effect than most, and looks as if good work would come of it.

204. The Missing Boat. (*Frank Stone.*)

Very good in much of its expression, and thoroughly careful, but too much elaborated in the studio, and not quite enough on the beach. It is got up too primly, as the principal figure is in her fishwife's dress. Sorrow, and salt water, after six hours' stand on the shingle, don't leave a woman's dress quite so tidy.

218. The Derby Day. (*W. P. Frith, R.A.*)

I am not sure how much power is involved in the production of such a picture as this; great ability there is assuredly—long and careful study—considerable humour—untiring industry,—all of them qualities entitled to high praise, which I doubt not they will receive from the delighted public. It is also quite proper and desirable that this English carnival should be painted: and of the entirely popular manner of painting, which, however, we must remember, is necessarily, because popular, stooping and restricted, I have never seen an abler example. The drawing of the distant figures seems to me especially dexterous and admirable; but it is very difficult to characterise the picture in accurate general terms. It is a kind of cross between John Leech and Wilkie, with a dash of daguerreotype here and there, and some pretty seasoning with Dickens's sentiment.

216. At a Farmhouse in Surrey. (*G. P. Boyce.*)

Full of truth and sweet feeling. How pleasant it is, after looking long at Mr. Frith's picture, to see how happy a little girl may be who hasn't gone to the Derby.

273. Emigrants on the Nile. (*F. Dillon.*)

Pelicans to wit; and many thanks to Mr. Dillon for giving us some idea of the wonderful aspect of the bird in flight: we must certainly have it carved so in a cusp or gargoyle in the Oxford Museum. The transitions of glowing colour, from the nearer ground to the sunlit horizon, are far finer than anything Mr. Dillon has yet accomplished: the drawing of the palm-trees seems admirable.

284. The Nativity. (*A. Hughes.*)

Quite beautiful in thought; and indicative of greater colourist's power than anything in the rooms; there is no other picture so right in manner of work, the utmost possible value being given to every atom of tint laid on the canvas. I happen to know that it was hastily finished, in an afterthought—and I am sorry to see that the painter has been fatigued to the point of not seeing how far he had failed in some parts of his purpose. He had another picture perfectly finished—and, though a little grotesque in fancy, exquisitely beautiful; "the King's Garden"—why has he not sent that?[1]

It is quite possible that, in this nativity, thoughtless people may be offended by an angel being set to hold a stable lantern. Everybody is ready to repeat pretty verses from Spenser about angels who "watch and truly ward," without ever asking themselves what they look out for—or what they ward off: everybody is also ready to talk about ministering spirits, so long as it is not asked what ministry means. Perhaps they might even reach to a distinct idea of such

[1] The absence of the other Pre-Raphaelite leaders from their posts is highly to be reprobated: they have no business to set themselves to work which they can't finish in proper time. Every year, at this season, the moment they have seen the effect of their pictures on the public, every one of them should go into the country; and before the long days are half over, each of them should have painted one picture of moderate size for next year: let them lock that up, and resolve not to look at it again till they see it on the Academy walls. Then set themselves to whatever perennial labour they choose to undertake, resting from it always about Easter, so as to be quite fresh to begin their regular Academy work again in May.

practical ministries on the part of angels as warding off a bullet from their son in India—or leading him to a spring when he was thirsty. But they cannot conceive that highest of all dignity in the entirely angelic ministration, which would simply do rightly whatever needed to be done—great or small—and steady a stable lantern if it swung uneasily, just as willingly as drive back a thunder cloud, or helm a ship with a thousand souls in it from a lee shore.

300. Weary Life. (*R. Carrick.*)

A notable picture; very great in many respects, but with grievous faults. The two principal figures are quite right—more especially the child; nothing can be more beautiful than the way it lies; nothing much better than the painting of it; and the thought of the whole singularly pathetic. But that thought is only half developed. I am amazed that a painter of Mr. Carrick's sincerity should allow himself in the conventionalisms of this design. What light is this that is cast on the two sleeping figures—morning?—evening?—noon? All suppositions are alike negatived by those trees in the background, which are in the deepest twilight; the rick under which the figures rest is also in darkness; and thus, for a mere effect of stage illumination on his foreground, the painter has lost all the pathos which there would have been in the calm of long, low sunshine on the solemn fields; or in the dew of the morning upon their peace—after the theatre's fantastic nocturns. The whole value of the background, as a space for informing incident, is also lost. No story is told by the dull trees. I will not take away Mr. Carrick's freedom and pleasure in invention by offering any suggestion as to the incidents that might occupy that background; but assuredly it ought not to be empty. Besides all this, the wonder of the peasant woman is vulgarly told—her gesture at this moment is highly improbable. She could not have approached so near the figures without seeing them before; unless we suppose her to have walked backwards, which indeed she might have done in raking: but the gesture has an unnatural and theatrical look for all that; and her face is utterly without expression. When there are only three figures in a picture, we must not make a nonentity of the nearest.

And lastly, the painting is throughout too hard; the straw especially is far too much defined. Has Mr. Carrick never

looked carefully at the straw in the first picture which showed the beauty of it—the "Dove returning to the Ark"—in which not a single stem was entirely defined, and yet all was real. It needs to be constantly kept in mind by all painters, that good painting must be reserved as well as expressive—it withholds always as much as it reveals. All mystery, or all clearness, is equally wrong, though clearness is the noblest error. Nature is simple, and therefore intelligible; but she is also infinite, and therefore mysterious. Whenever you can make a bit of painting quite out, that bit of it is wrong. There is no exception to this rule.

The picture is, however, so beautiful, in spite of all these defects, that it becomes almost the duty of the painter to perfect it.

326. A Pastoral. (*J. C. Hook, A.*)

Exquisite in idea, and some qualities of colour, as Mr. Hook's pictures are always; but by no means better than what he did last year, and if not better, then necessarily a little worse. Pause is, I believe, not possible in art. It is a pity thoughts so beautiful should not be entirely realised: this is, at best, but a full and suggestive sketch. It is not the way to paint a dog, nor a woman's arm, nor a sky.

453 is again entirely right and beautiful in conception, but imperfect in touch. There is a peculiar truth in the way he has given the deep tone of the colour of the sea, out of which the surf opens upon the rocks, like a great light, the snowy glare and roar coming at the same instant.

350. Flower Girls—Town and Country. (*J. C. Horsley, A.*)

The boldest effort we have yet seen from Mr. Horsley's hand, and I think a very telling one. It is another example of the moralising tendency of the art of the day; but if Mr. Horsley makes his ladies going to masquerades look so charming in their gay dresses, I fear they will continue to wear them, in spite of poor flower-girls leaning against the gate-pillars, or innocent examples of life in the country.

372. (*A. L. Egg.*)

As I see that several mistakes have been made in the interpretation of this impressive picture in the public prints, I give the true reading of it, though I should have thought it was clearly enough legible. In the central piece the husband discovers his wife's infidelity: he dies five years

afterwards. The two lateral pictures represent the same moment of night a fortnight after his death. The same little cloud is under the moon. The two children see it from the chamber in which they are praying for their lost mother, and their mother, from behind a boat under a vault on the river-shore. The painting, as such, is not first-rate; but the purpose of the picture is well reached, and the moonlight is true and beautiful.

428. Past and Present. (*Miss A. Blunden.*)

There is not a more painstaking nor sincere piece of work than this in the room; though it is clearly the work of a hand which has not yet gained its full strength. The figures are far from satisfactory; but there are pieces of the old manor house and fore-ground thoroughly felt, and very nearly got right—much righter in general tone of colour than is usual in early work so far carried. The picture is very curious in its quantity of work, and well worth a long stoop to it.

442. The Gaoler's Daughter. (*P. H. Calderon.*)

The figure of the imprisoned priest is perfectly right and beautiful: the girl, nearly so, but the child ought to be repainted; it spoils a very touching picture. Mr. Calderon had a promising little interior picture in the British Institution.

455. The Ducal Palace, Venice. (*D. Roberts, R.A.*)

As this seems to be a definite and energetic protest by Mr. Roberts against Turner's idea of Venetian colour, and against all that I have endeavoured to urge, or describe in support of that conception, I can only accept it as such, and pass it by: but I may at least say that protests against gondoliers' management of their boats are not likely to be effective. No gondolier can by any possibility get into any one of the positions here supposed, more especially that of the figure on the left. A gondola is rowed from a little elevated deck, with a raised slope for the hindmost foot, close at its stern, not near the felze (canopy), and at his fullest thrust forward the rower's position is well over the boat's side on his left hand; so that if he missed his stroke, he would go head foremost into the water on that side, without even touching the felze: the certainty of which result renders a tyro's first efforts with the stern oar exceedingly interesting—as well as the no less precise certainty

that if he catches a crab, (and fish of this species may be easily secured on a windy day), he must go instantly into the water over the stern.

499. Reynard's Glove. (*Miss A. F. Mutrie.*)

Very pretty, indeed, Miss Mutrie, as usual; but you know those are perfect dwarfs of foxgloves. Bud, bell, and seed, I counted 148 on one stem last summer (under the last crag of the Ochils, that looks to Stirling), and an average foxglove that has at all enjoyed its life, will always have seventy or eighty. One energetic fellow I saw near Inverness, who had not indeed enjoyed his life, but had grandly made the best of it; he had been broken down in his youth—his head laid down hill, past all rising again; but he had lost no courage, thrown out three upright shoots from the side of his stem, and become three foxgloves instead of one.

500. Daughters of the Alhambra. (*J. Phillip.*)

All Mr. Phillip's work is able, and, to a certain extent, right; but I think he has never again done anything so good as his picture of the church-door two years ago. He is losing refinement; while his Spanish ladies—and still more his Spanish lovers—seem to me all somewhat more Phillippian than Castilian. This picture is, however, a good example,—rich, and pleasantly composed.

526. The Warren. (*J. W. Oakes.*)

Exquisitely painted in the flowery centre; but of all foregrounds, one of sand and bent grass least pays labour; and why does Mr. Oakes concentrate his strength on foregrounds only? He had a beautiful barley-field in the British Institution—with butterflies on it, and some nice furze and thistles besides; but a great deal more of them than was wanted; while the distance was wholly crude and unsatisfactory.

528. Peaceful Days. (*P. R. Morris.*)

Very beautiful, and easier in mode of laying colour than most of the work of the year.

557. Sunset on the Lagune. (*E. W. Cooke, R.A.*)

I can answer for the truth of this study, representing one of the calm sea-glories of Venice, which painters are too apt to despise, though poets never. Both Shelley and Byron seem to have loved these Euganean Hills and the sunsets behind them, more than Venice herself.

562. "Thou wert our Conscript." (*H. Wallis.*)

On the whole, to my mind, the picture of the year; and but narrowly missing being a first-rate of any year. It is entirely pathetic and beautiful in purpose and colour; its only fault being a somewhat too heavy laying of the body of paint, more especially in the distant sky, which has no joy nor clearness when it is looked close into, and in the blue of the hills that rise against it, which is also too uniform and dead. All perfect painting is light painting—light at some point of the touch at all events; no half inch of a good picture but tells, when it is looked at, "None but my master could have laid me so."

The ivy, ferns, &c., seem to me somewhat hastily painted, but they are lovely in colour, and may pass blameless, as I think it would have been in false taste to elaborate this subject further. The death quietness given by the action of the startled weasel is very striking.

854. The Rivals, from Clynnog Beach. (*C. F. Williams.*)

The magnificent sketch by Landseer in this room, showing, as it does, all his wonderful handling on the boldest scale, must withdraw all eyes at first from the lower walls. But when due honour has been done to the deer, this careful and unpretending study deserves a minute's stooping to it, admirable as it is alike in rendering of extent of wet sand, weedy shingle, and breaking wave; and then it would be well to cross to 609 (H. Anelay), which, though not an altogether successful effort, is a most earnest one to render the mingling of transparency with reflection in pure and perfect sea. Who ever dreamed of painting sea like this till now? and yet that is simply the normal state of sea. What we have been in the habit, taught by the Dutch, of calling sea-pieces, ought to be called merely mud-bottom pieces.

1089. Stone Breaker. (*J. Brett.*)

This, after John Lewis's, is simply the most perfect piece of painting with respect to touch, in the Academy this year; in some points of precision it goes beyond anything the Pre-Raphaelites have done yet. I know no such thistle-down, no such chalk hills, and elm-trees, no such natural pieces of far away cloud in any of their works.

The composition is palpably crude and wrong in many ways, especially in the awkward white cloud at the top; and

the tone of the whole a little too much as if some of the chalk of the flints had been mixed with all the colours. For all that, it is a marvellous picture, and may be examined inch by inch with delight; though nearly the last stone I should ever have thought of any one's sitting down to paint, would have been a chalk flint. If he can make so much of that, what will Mr. Brett not make of mica slate and gneiss! If he can paint so lovely a distance from the Surrey downs and railway-traversed vales, what would he not make of the chestnut groves of the Val d'Aosta! I heartily wish him good speed and long exile.

FRENCH EXHIBITION

Generally, this exhibition is full of interest; and instructive to our English painters in the evidence of steady training shown in its work. It is dominant in scenes of domestic life; deficient in landscape.

7. The Plough. (*Mdlle. Rosa Bonheur.*)

This lady gains in power every year, but there is one stern fact concerning art which she will do well to consider, if she means her power to reach full development. No painter of animals ever yet was entirely great, who shrank from painting the human face; and Mdlle. Bonheur clearly *does* shrink from it. Of course, a ploughman ploughing westward at evening slouches his hat and stoops his head; but the back of him, in this action, with a foreshortened yoke of oxen, and three of the awkwardest haystacks in France, do not altogether constitute a subject for a picture. In the Horse-Fair, the human faces were nearly all dexterously, but disagreeably, hidden, and the one chiefly shown had not the slightest character. Mdlle. Bonheur may rely upon this, that if she cannot paint a man's face, she can neither paint a horse's, a dog's, nor a bull's. There is in every animal's eye a dim image and gleam of humanity, a flash of strange light through which their life looks out and up to our great mystery of command over them, and claims the fellowship of the creature, if not of the soul. I assure Mdlle. Bonheur, strange as the words may sound to her, after what she has been told by huntsmen and racers, she has never painted a horse yet. She has only painted trotting bodies of horses.

62. The Gleaner Boy. (*Edward Frere.*)

The expressions of admiration for this painter's work which I used last year, were thought by many readers to have been written in a fit of momentary and uncalculating enthusiasm. I repeat therefore—after a year's deliberation—with such plain and purposed meaning as I always try to give words which I know will seem questionable, that this painter unites; "the depth of Wordsworth, the grace of Reynolds, and the holiness of Angelico."

That is to say, first, he approaches the simplest subject with perfect feeling of its great humanity, conscious of all the most solemn pathos which there is in the crowned sorrows of poverty, and calm submissions of toil:—interpreting to the full, and for the first time in the history of sacred paintings, the great words of the first Beatitude. For the poverty which was honoured by the great painters and thinkers of the middle ages was an ostentatious, almost a presumptuous poverty; if not this, at least it was chosen and accepted—the poverty of men who had given their goods to feed the simpler poor, and who claimed in honour what they had lost in luxury; or, at the best, in claiming nothing for themselves, had still a proud understanding of their own self-denial, and a confident hope of future reward. But it has been reserved for this age to perceive and tell the blessedness of another kind of poverty than this; not voluntary nor proud, but accepted and submissive; not clear-sighted nor triumphant, but subdued and patient: partly patient in tenderness—of God's will; partly patient in blindness—of man's oppression; too laborious to be thoughtful—too innocent to be conscious—too long experienced in sorrow to be hopeful—waiting in its peaceful darkness for the unconceived dawn; yet not without its own sweet, complete, untainted happiness, like intermittent notes of birds before the daybreak, or the first gleams of heaven's amber on the eastern grey. Such poverty as this it has been reserved for this age of ours to honour while it afflicted; it is reserved for the age to come, to honour it—and to spare.

I said, secondly, that this painter had "the grace of Reynolds:"—that is to say, grace consummate, no painter having ever before approached Reynolds in the rendering of the momentary loveliness and trembling life of childhood, by beauty of play and change in every colour and curve;

the great Venetians were too great to do it; their lines were always grave and severe in their grace; and all other men but Reynolds have been too mean to do it, until this one. And, lastly, I say he has the holiness of Angelico: that is to say, perfect purity from all sensual taint, from all baseness of associated ideas, there never passing over his brow so much as the shadow of an Evil Spirit's wings. This I say of him, and also that the man of whom this may truly be said is, if he uses his power faithfully, simply and briefly one of the chief men of this century. But on his faithfulness to the gift of his deep heart all now rests: and he is at present failing in this faithfulness. I noticed last year that there were certain characters in his painting which, in any other man's work, would have been faults, and which were only to be forgiven in him so far as they were unavoidable in getting his main result. Now this year the main result is not better —is not even quite so good, and the faults are more conspicuous, proving themselves therefore faults positive. The colour even of the faces is less pure; that of the background is becoming dark and heavy; it is difficult to see even as much as the painter intends us to see: we feel as if there were a coating of clay over the work which wants to be washed off. This manner of painting will assuredly gain upon him, unless he sets a standard to himself far beyond it; and I believe he will have to paint some pieces of still life, in which no question of feeling or of harmony of expression will interfere with his efforts, up to the highest point of finish possible to him, for exercise merely: afterwards receding from the precision and brilliancy he does not want when he uses such passages in his pictures. Take, for instance, the piece of near grass in this "Gleaner;" it, of course, in nowise resembles grass: not a leaf of it is true, nor is it lovely; it is merely an indication of the thing meant, in a tone harmonious with the rest of the work. Now the painter ought not only to see more in the grass than this, but ought to be able to paint more, without hurting his general effect.[1] So, also, in the corn which the boy

[1] The reader may perhaps be surprised at my speaking here somewhat in the tone of one of the men of the old "generalisation" school: about subduing parts for the effect of the whole. But this is because I do not consider Frere's as finished pictures, but as sketches of expression. In a finished picture, all must be finished; and in a sketch, all must be

carries, there is none of the beauty or complexity of a real cluster of wheat; and if the artist would draw the real sheaf perfectly, he would be able to make the number of touches he has permitted himself here, quite as subordinate, but far more lovely. The sadness of colour which he chooses, is indeed a part, and a very important part, of the pathos of his subjects—but he must take care not to allow melancholy to sink into ennui, nor humility to degenerate into dullness.

I take no separate note of the other pictures by him in this room; for I believe the persons who can feel them at all will feel them without being much talked to about them: only it should be observed generally that the greatness of Frere consists in such slight things that it is only by long looking at his work that it can be felt: the difference between him and all other painters of similar subjects is quite infinite—and yet it depends literally on hairsbreadths, and less than hairsbreadths; on the ineffable subtlety of line which makes gesture or expression precisely *right*. Examine, for instance, the way the child leans on her sister, pushing a little to get at the shells in her lap, in No. 59, and consider how it is that all the child's mind is given in its attitude—all its fitful, troublesome, innocent, inconsequent eagerness, just in the turn of a sleeve!

103. Sea Shore at Blankenburg — Afternoon. (*Henri Le Hon.*)

Very clever in the balanced depressions of tone which bring out the gleams of light on boat and sea, and showing, I think, great feeling and skill in the painter; but this depression of tone is, nevertheless, a standing mistake of the French school. The French painters always chill the colours of nature as they lower them, by toning everything

sketched, up to an harmonious point—nothing beyond that point. Frere's faces are not finished; he seems to pause just when he has touched the truth of expression, lest he should lose it by doing more. Then, of course, the accessories must not be finished in a higher degree; he must be content with the expression only of those—as with the expression only of the human face. The rule I gave for finished pictures is a perfectly true one—namely, that if you paint faces ill, you must not try to mend them by painting backgrounds worse: but it is also a true rule, that if you sketch a figure lightly, you must not finish the burden it carries heavily, nor give a completion to the lesser thing which you have refused to the greater. The picture, No. 63, is, however, very nearly up to his mark of last year. The hair of the child is beautifully touched.

with grey: and thus not only alter the depth and pitch of the colour, but the colour itself. They do not merely change its key, but debase its nature,—that is to say, if they have trees to lower, they turn what is in reality pale *pure* green into dark *dirty* green, when they ought to change it only into a darker green of the same purity; and if they have pale yellow sand to lower, instead of lowering it to a dark yellow, equally glowing, they lower it to a dark grey, and thus turn sand into slime. It is very curious, that in spite of all the talk about Titian, this simple principle of his colouring, has never been understood. When Titian lowers tones, he always lowers them without changing the colours. Pale blue he translates into ultramarine: pale rose-colour into crimson: pale sand-colour into deep brown: and pale green into emerald green; but he never pollutes the blue sky with blackness, nor stains pale roses with clay; whereas, nearly all the French landscapes in this room represent nature seen through a smoked glass. If the sky had only been half as livid at the last eclipse of the sun as the French landscapists represent it on sunny afternoons, the birds would have gone to roost in a much more satisfactory way than I hear they did.

108. The Study. (*Louis Ernest Meissonier.*)

I look upon this work and its companion (109) with exceeding sorrow, for they show great powers wasted in producing results either useless, or worse than useless in so far as they encourage the disposition of the modern patron—so long fatal to the best interests and highest purposes of art—to spend his wealth in petty luxuries of the drawing-room, instead of in the bold and large art which is visible to all men, and helpful to all men. I have never in anywise joined in the vague cry raised usually by ambitious and weak painters, for public encouragement to "high art," or "historical art,"—as if art might not be both high and historical on a small scale as well as a large one. But, on the other hand, I have always protested, in the strongest way I could, against the miserable degradation of pictures, by the influence of the Dutch schools, into toys for boudoirs, or marvels for cabinets. And here is the old Dutch principle again in all its strength. Narrow, easily imitated, easily appreciated chiaroscuro, let in by a single window, to get dioramic relief—brown shadows—bright touches—dull

surfaces—coppery colours;—all Flanders and Holland over again. Quite as good as ever Holland did; nay, it seems to me, in some respects, better; but assuredly quite as wretched, as forgetful of the high purposes of painting, and as traitorous to the royalty of human nature.

130. The Music Lesson. (*Emile Plassan.*)

Exquisite in touch of pencil, and in appreciation of delicate character, both in features and gesture.

It is lighter and softer in laying of colour than Frere's work, and more refined in colour than Meissonier's; on the whole it seems to me the best piece of quiet painting in the room. The French painters far surpass us in their understanding of the light expressions and trivial actions of daily life; partly because they aim at them more simply, and are content to be true and polished, while our painters are always striving to be heroic, moral, or amusing; but also, I suppose, from an innate tact and sympathy which we never have possessed—nor can possess.

139. Marguerite at the Fountain. (*Ary Scheffer.*)

As this picture is designed on the assumption that the universe generally is vulgar, and that the noblest ideal of colour is to be found in dust, it of course puts itself beyond criticism. But it suggests a curious question. It may be—I believe it is—a just view of the depth and purity of Marguerite's character, which assumes that the first whispers of her companions would not flush her face, but turn it pale. But, supposing the painter should ever wish to paint a woman "glowing all over noble shame," how will he reconcile the human crimson with the dusty insensibilities of his background?

SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

84. Borromean Islands on the Lago Maggiore (?) (*J. B. Pyne.*)

I am sincerely glad to see that Mr. Pyne has succeeded in reaching better qualities of colour than in his earlier pictures. I had feared the range of his work had been limited by natural incapacity for the perception of hue; but he begins to disprove such incapacity, and it seems to me quite at his own choice whether he will now become a real

artist, or remain merely a popular draughtsman and supplier of the market with "lake scenery." It is at his own choice, I repeat,—but only at his resolute choice; for he has much to surrender of his own, and much to learn from the external world. His own part in the conception of this No. 84, for instance—is somewhat too manifest—and highly curious. The picture appears to represent an inlet of green water among desolate rocks, somewhere near the North Pole; the faint, pure, frosty, Arctic light penetrating into their jagged hollows; a shore of grey slime, washed down from the glaciers, stretches into the shallow water of the inlet, on which tongue of land (at the right hand of the spectator) Mr. Pyne has erected a small model of an Italian campanile and some clay houses. On the slope of the hill above he has carried his bitterness of mockery of any lost navigator, to the extent of setting up some pillars as they usually stand in the alleys of vineyards, and arranging some copper foliage upon them, having a resemblance to vine leaves, distant indeed, but yet clear enough to be very painful to persons suffering from cold and hunger. It is true there is some Iceland moss in the foreground—(is it not slightly too brown for that lichen?); and his malice towards his fellow-men is tempered by some kindness for animals; since by raising an island, traversed by alternate terraces and slopes, in the middle of the lagoon, he has provided for the exercise and amusement of the white bears, who, it is well known, are fond of sliding down small slopes of this kind on their hind-quarters.

If Mr. Pyne is determined to paint these Arctic desolations, he would find that their real incidents were in the end more interesting, though less startling, than these grotesque introductions of Surrey-garden decoration; but I do not see why he should confine himself to Northern subjects. Among the Italian lakes, to one of which this very Polar scene bears (except in the forms of the mountains) so singular a resemblance as to have caused, I presume, the mistake in the catalogue, he would find materials, which though at first much more difficult to treat, would, in the end, reward his labour with a richer charm; shores dark with ilex and soft with olive, are surely pleasanter than slimy shallows; and the Alps of the Simplon, soaring through their twelve thousand feet of air, purple with everlasting

pines, are better worth painting than these little crags jutting out of the pools of the glacial sea, and hardly high enough to catch a few of the level rays of the revolving sun upon their lichenless edges.

Seriously and heartily, I am sorry for Mr. Pyne, his work has now become well worth sorrow; I never knew before that he cared for rosy lights and blue shadows, or could feel that there were other forms in the world than those of Mendip limestones. But I see here that he can; and that he is only shutting himself wilfully away from the beauty that he might delight in. All these scenes of fairy land, which he supposes can only be got by fallacy, exist in truth —exist in tenderness and loveliness, greater than he has any dream of;—greater than he could at present conceive possible. But between them and him lies a fiery trial. His work, clever though it be, is at present wrong to the very core; so fatally has he blinded himself to the great facts of the earth. If he could bear to have this false work and the false principles involved in it fairly burnt away—burnt to their foundations, and after humiliation in their ashes, will paint steadily for six months from things quiet in colour and commonplace (as he will at first suppose) in form—solemnly resolving to allow himself neither a fallacy nor an avoidable incompletion; and having done this penance, will then seek again some of his favourite scenes, he will find a new world opened to him, from which he will never desire to wander more.

115. Mozart's Last Chorus.

Not a good picture; but very touching in its subject, and I think successful—(is it not? for musicians must be judges in this)—in the principal figure.

188. The Windings of the Wye. (*H. J. Boddington.*)

I am puzzled by the pictures of this class which the society produces so abundantly. There are this year about fifty in the room of nearly equal average value; some are a little richer in blue than others—some a little warmer in brown; a few, Mr. Syer's chiefly—(201, for instance)—are more dexterous and light in touch than the rest; and one or two, like this 188, more ambitious in size and subject, but they may all be classed together as imperfect studies from pleasant mountain scenery, dependent for effect chiefly on redundance of rock forms and opposition of warm light to purple shade,

with occasionally considerable tenderness of atmosphere—well studied reflections in water, and sharply touched sticks and stones in the foreground. Nevertheless, I do not look upon them as done by recipe. There is evidence in all of them that the painters have worked much out of doors, and have faced midges and wet weather many a long day before they could either get into those dexterous habits of rock-drawing, or give definite portraiture of all the rock basins in a torrent bed—as Mr. Pettitt has done in 139. Moreover, I really think they love the hills: those elaborate pieces of mountain flank, touched with amber, look to me as if they were painted quite for love—not to speak of many pretty stones and cottages, and streams with foam on them, and even bubbles—yes, and for the first time, as far as I recollect, bubbles with colour (699). But there is one fatal wrong in all of them, which is simply that nothing is *quite* right. The whole is respectable; but no single stone, no wreath of cloud, no cottage gable, is absolutely, decisively, insuperably good.

They are wrong, also, by having always too much of the same kind of thing. Too much bank—all alike; too many rocks—all alike; each piece of the picture undoes another, and nobody ever feels inclined to ask for more.

Then, farther, there are no strange things in them. Nature always looks strange when she is truly rendered, and is always doing what none of us expect from her. These painters never seem to get any out-of-the-way glimpses, or to catch one of the humours of the clouds in a wayward day. There was a little green bit of sunshine on the wet grass in the British Institution (234, C. Leslie), which had far more sight in it than any of these large pictures, though sharing with them the last fault I have to name—overloading and too smooth laying of colour. Half as much paint would have produced a result twice as good. Titian would put glow into a whole head with no more paint than goes to one of the touches on these foregrounds.

252. A Fisherman's Daughter of Mola di Gæta. (*F. Y. Hurlstone.*)

Is it too late for Mr. Hurlstone to recover himself? He might have been a noble painter. Bad and coarse as it is, that bright fish is the best piece of mere painting in all the rooms; and I believe, if Mr. Hurlstone would set himself

fairly to take account of his own work, he might yet feel how fast he is sinking. If he would but look some morning for half an hour steadily and closely at that piece of Thames slime, stained with dim gouts and blotches of vermilion, which he has given in the place of a left hand to the fisherman's daughter: and then walk straight into the National Gallery, and look for another half-hour at the drooped left hand of the princess—holding her crown—in Veronese's picture, I do believe he might yet be seized with desire to recover his ground;—and this desire, in him, would be capacity.

454. The Wife's Remonstrance. (*J. Campbell.*)

By far the best picture in the Suffolk-street Rooms this year: full of pathos, and true painting. But I fear Mr. Campbell is unredeemably under the fatal influence which shortens the power of so many of the Pre-Raphaelites—the fate of loving ugly things better than beautiful ones. In his "Visit to the Old Sailor" (800), he has painted the rugged face well; but quite spoiled the child's. He ought to repaint the child's face: the rest of the drawing is worth any pains he could spend on it.

783. Roast Chestnut Seller. (*F. Smallfield.*)

An interesting and successful study, as are also several other drawings by this artist in this room. But he seems to me to be imitating William Hunt's execution, without thoroughly understanding the motive of it. If he does not see things rough, he should not paint them so: in No. 716 the blue sleeve looks like worsted work, not like painting. He has, however, two excellent studies in the Royal Academy, (33, 877.)

NEW SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS

18. The Bass Rock. (*J. W. Whymper.*)

A most interesting subject, truly seen, and well rendered up to a certain point. There is no high power of present execution shown in it; but I think the painter must have great feeling, and perhaps even the rare gift of invention. Those bird-clouds are well wreathed and tossed, so as to

show the noble form of the rock. I hope this painter may advance far.

63. Bardj. Açouss. (*Charles Vacher.*)

There is great beauty of tone in many of Mr. Vacher's drawings, and their impression is often most pleasing: but he should really leave out the figures for some time to come, exercising himself in figure-drawing in the meanwhile; and also he needs to study individual pieces of foreground with more respect for their local colours. He is working too much by recipe, and the nearer stones are here very meagre.

111. The Rising of the Ground Sea. (*S. Cooke.*)

This is a drawing full of merit and feeling for sea; but there are five others by this artist in the room, and in all of them there is a green sea under a slight breeze, breaking on a flat shore. The sea thus represented six times over, is indeed very like salt water, and the waves shake well along their edges, giving more suggestion than usual of the tremulousness which so often runs in a kind of electric current along the whole length of a breaker's edge as it rises. But I sincerely hope Mr. Cooke will make some effort to break from this slavery to one kind of wave. He might teach himself, and us, a serviceable lesson by resolving, on the first morning of summer, when there was a likelihood of unsettled, but not stormy weather during the day, to go down to the beach as soon after dawn as possible, and make a rapid sketch of the exact aspect of sea and sky at every two hours, as the day passed on, until sunset; afterwards trying to realise each with complete sincerity, and sending the nine drawings as a series to the next Exhibition. He would find they attracted more notice than these repetitions of green breakers. 309 is, however, very lovely.

114. The Bay of Naples. (*T. L. Rowbotham.*)

What I said of Mr. Rowbotham's work last year I must take leave to repeat, for I do believe there is the making of a good landscape painter in him. I think, in spite of all his artificialness, he has enthusiasm—loves what he tries to paint, and works hard; and where there is enthusiasm, and no shirking of labour, there is no saying what a painter may make of himself if once he takes the right turn of the road. Of the merely blottesque workman I have far less hope. He is often more right, as far as he reaches, than the enthusiastic one; but there is no growth in him. Mr. Bennett, for

instance, perhaps looks out of his green shades with contempt on Mr. Rowbotham's white and blue, as feeling that he is simpler in heart, and truer in purpose. But then he purposes nearly nothing—loving fields and trees only with a serene, vegetative affection; whereas if Mr. Rowbotham but once takes a fancy to finish one of his pretty subjects fairly on the spot—nay, if he but draws so much as the window of an Italian cottage completely—his mind will be altered about many matters before the sketch is well dry; and then all his admiration of rocks and lakes may be brought into good service. At present it is sufficiently sad to see him defrauding himself of the very picturesqueness he delights in, by painting out of what he supposes to be his head, but is, in reality, only his habit. He knows well enough, as well as I do, that those trios of similar windows (compare 130) are not particularly interesting; but he does not yet know that they are also impossible, and that there are the most delightful window groups to be had every day, and in every place, merely for the trouble of looking at them and noting them down.

182. Song of the Georgian Maiden. (*H. Warren.*)

Full of cleverness; but continually false in passages, owing to the violent striving for brilliancy. I do not dwell upon the errors, because so dexterous an artist must surely know them well enough himself, and I suppose therefore, he means, for the sake of dazzling, to persist in them.

207. In the Forest of Dean. (*Edmund E. Warren.*)

A very interesting study; the dark side of the trunk is singularly consistent and right in its gradations; the effect of the whole as true as it is possible for anything to be which is not delicately coloured, but depends for all its results on mere brown, grey, and green, laid in right chiaroscuro.

I fear the success is mechanical; but I wish that the younger Pre-Raphaelite painters, who cannot yet bring their details into true balance of force, would take note how much appearance of truth to nature has been obtained in this drawing merely by the consistent relations of its shade, and would try to give the same consistency to their own truer hues.

218. A Miracle Play. (*Edward Corbould.*)

An amusing subject, which would, however, have been more intelligible if Mr. Corbould had quoted some of the

text of the play. I recollect reading it with great edification one wet day at Chester, some ten years ago, but I remember now only the heroic determination of Noah's wife, and the less heroic resolves of her gossips, expressed as follows; I cannot answer for the spelling:—

Three Gossips.—Here is a pottle full of Malmsey, gode and stronge,
Tho' Noe thynke us never so longe,
Yet we will drink alyke.

Noah's wife.—Yea, Noe, set up your sayle,
And row forth with evylle hayle.
But I love my gossippes, each one.
One foote further will I not gone;
They shall not drown—*by Saint John*,
And I may save their lyffe.
But thou shalt let them into that kist,
Els, row forth, Noe, where thou list,
And gette thee a new wyf.

223. A Study. (*T. Sutcliffe.*)

The furze in this drawing is admirable, and the whole thing got straight from nature; but Mr. Sutcliffe chooses his subjects ill, owing, I believe, to his not working enough in chiaroscuro merely, and allowing himself to be captivated by a single pretty bit, like those golden brambles on the purple rock, without considering whether the forms and arrangement of the whole are available. He should now study for some time with a view to arrangement only.

OLD SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS

I congratulate the Society on its great advance this year. I have placed my notes on their drawings last, because it is pleasant to stay latest with old friends.

15. Snowdon from Capel Curig. (*D. Cox.*)

Though Mr. Cox's work is every year broader in handling, and therefore farther, as mere work, from the completeness I would generally advocate, it becomes always more majestic or more interesting in conception. I have deeper sympathy with some of his this year's drawings than with any I ever yet saw from his hand. This is a rich and beautiful one; but the bits please me most which no one but he would

have thought of painting, and which are made pictures of by a little thing in the right place, as 178 is by the black and white dog. The bank above, and distance, are wonderful pieces of grey colour.

29. Gates at the Villa Somma Riva. (*W. Evans.*)

The drawing cannot be called good; but there is a new idea and vision of Gates in it: and it is therefore very noteworthy. But what does Mr. Evans mean by this coarse way of work, with so much odd good, and so much odd wrong, in it? 57, for instance, has a great deal of good—and the violent wrong of vertical reflections of oblique lines, which spoils all; and 10 is very like Vesuvius and the Apennines in winter—a very certain piece of fact—but what very remarkable and objectionable mules!

33. Highland Gillie, with Dogs and Black Game.

I suffer intense anxiety to see this remarkable gillie, who never grows old, and who has had for the last ten years of Mr. Tayler's painting him, the same little portcullis of carmine on his left cheek, and the same narrow stream of liquorice down his forehead and the right side of his nose.

It is not Presidential work, Mr. Tayler—you know as well as I that it is not right; and you know, better than I, how much you could do with that facile hand of yours if you chose; it seems to me you might paint dogs and ponies as well as Landseer, and Highland gillies, full of life, with real Celtic blood in their cheeks, instead of these little tartan patterns of rouge, if you would only forego for a year or two the pretty praise of the drawing-room—despise for ever the boisterous praise of the stable—and set yourself to paint veritable human nature, instead of lay figures in tasselled caps (compare No. 132); and veritable dog form and power, instead of those little yelping (they *do* yelp, certainly!) compounds of bistre-blots and flakes of white, with dots in every eye to make them glitter.

46. A Mountain Torrent, late in Autumn. (*C. Branwhite.*)

Farther carried than the artist's usual work, expressing some sufficient solidity in the rocks, and reaching some grandeur of form in the hills. But whence came the idea of painting autumn in the Highlands without a mountain ash? nay, without one dead leaf or withered fern! I assume that this scene is to be imagined in the Highlands; it very

certainly *is* nowhere; but it is more like a Scottish glen than a Welsh one, (entirely unlike the Alps); and if Scottish scenery is pre-eminent in anything, it is just in the gold and scarlet of the mountain ashes in early November, and in the way the dark purple rocks get studded with the dead leaves like golden byzants, the wind carrying them in whirls into their crannies, and the moist mists fastening them to the surfaces without washing them down, till every lonely crag looks like one of Veronese's purple robes embossed with gold. How it is possible for a painter to walk once through a Highland glen in autumn, and miss this, I cannot conceive; nor how Mr. Branwhite, possessing some real power of drawing, can like these various conditions of scratch and dash in brown paint better than curled tops of closing fern, or than the splendid iron-russet sprays of the dead heath-blossoms, soft here and there with faint lilac, where a living bell remains.

However, slight and affected as the work is, it is firmer than last year's; and we must hope better things for the future.

62. A Lingerer. (*W. Turner.*)

Not up to Mr. Turner's usual work; but the only thing I have seen this year at all like heather. 172 is, however, very impressive and precious drawing: full of truth in its far-off Highland hills, and glowing sky, and low-floating mists.

72. Sty Head Tarn, Cumberland. Early Morning. (*P. S. Jackson.*)

Very pathetic and true in its waves of mist under sunrise; but too monotonous in colour of clouds. The rock foreground expresses faithfully the fact, too often overlooked, of a great rounded mass of slate splitting and gaping gradually under frost, giving a flat-bottomed block at the top, with a rounded back like a turtle's, and flat tabular masses in succession below, rounded on their outer edges.

112. A Winter Scene. Carting Ice. (*E. Duncan.*)

Carefully studied in some of its aërial effects; but winter mists would be enchanting indeed, if they could turn trees into knots of serpents. It is very strange that Mr. Duncan should work so conscientiously and quietly through the difficult part of his drawing, and yet not take the small pains which would have made the whole satisfactory, by sketching that tree on the left, and the pollard willow on the right, from nature. Any tree in the world would have done; and when

Mr. Duncan does draw a tree from nature, he will find that a bough half a foot thick at the beginning of it, ramifies into more than two twigs at the end of it.

126. In the Sabine Hills. (*Carl Haag.*)

Very beautiful and right—up to the point sought. I have perhaps never before seen a piece of the Italian limestone, scorched dry in the sun, so thoroughly realised, whether in the lie of the oblique beds under the shrine, or in the mass on this side of the path spotted with black lichen. The distant mountain is very soft and lovely in colour, and quite as true as lovely. The reflected light in the roof of the shrine is rightly cast, and richly glowing. What can possibly be the matter with this picture—making it not a great one—for a great one assuredly it is not?

I believe the same things are the matter with it, only in a far less painful degree, which destroy so much of the value of Carl Haag's figure pieces—namely, a delight in texture rather than in forms or undulations of surface; or (in rougher words), in the skin rather than the make of things; farther—a delight in violent contrasts of colour rather than in finely invented harmonies of it—(the same thing as the endeavour of a composer to get effect by passages of flute and harp after drum and trumpet, instead of by real invention of successions in chords), and lastly and chiefly, a tendency to stage sentiment rather than life sentiment: making him insist always more on costume than expression; nay, in fact, always see costume first. And, observe, this error is not merely the common one of which the Pre-Raphaelites are so often accused (for the most part falsely), of painting accessories better than principalities, when the principalities are nevertheless seen and tried for. For in Carl Haag's work the principal things are *not* seen. A peasant offers herself to his eyes as a kind of book of patterns; the main phenomena of her are her cap and bodice; he cannot recover from the sensation of astonishment at her dress so as to discern that there is a human being within it. A man is, in his eyes, mainly different from a chamois in wearing leggings: if Cadmus had sown hobnails instead of teeth, one might have expected a crop of such men as these. I verily believe that the best thing the painter could do would be to go to the Tyrol, and himself wear green breeches and a conical hat till he got quite used to them, and perceived that there

was really nothing so awful nor wonderful in either, but that he might paint without being overpowered by their presence.

He is, however, doing better every year. This landscape seems to me a great step in advance, and I hope we shall have more of the kind. Carl Haag's forte, as it has been in worsted among men, will evidently be in lichens among rocks, but that is no reason why these respectable and long-lived vegetables should not have their painters. By the way, they and the fungi have all fortune's favour this year; for William Hunt's beautiful little picture (244) is the first, so far as I know, painted entirely in honour of the little ephemeral beauties, as Carl Haag's is the first which has entirely expressed the character of the black stains of mountain life which hardly change their shapes in a thousand years.

130. Lihou Island, near Guernsey. (*P. J. Naftel.*)

An excellent study of sea-shore. His Rocquain Bay, 53, is hung so high that it is likely to escape notice; and this would be a pity, were it but for the beauty of the subject; it is pleasant to know what lovely lanes there are in the Channel Islands, in full green in this present spring time. Rather too green, I think, here on paper. Tree shadows are more violet.

197. Declining Day. View in Argyllshire. (*A. P. Newton.*)

It is curious what compensation time and tide bring for every evil. First come railroads to make us all restless; next come faithful painters, to draw everything so well that we needn't leave home to see it. Let Mr. Newton but draw all the four sides of Ben Nevis as he has done this one, and nobody need ever go to the mountain again for the mere sake of seeing what it is like. I know all about it, nearly, already, though I never have been near it, merely by this one drawing—quite wonderful in its expression of Scottish hill form, and very right and noble in colour. I believe it was hastily finished under heavy disadvantage, owing to an accident which happened to the painter; the foreground is therefore coarse, and I think the lower purples of the mountain may, in another such drawing, be purer and lovelier; but the expression of its shaly sides and knotted crags cannot be much bettered.

In 145, the mountains are also nobly drawn, but the

foreground is again incomplete; the houses and other near objects look mean and small.

285. An Italian Cottage Door. (*Alfred Fripp.*)

All of this painter's work in the room is of exceeding interest to me; more significative of progress, and more full in promise than any other; and that in three ways—in method of work, system of shade, and intention of sentiment.

In method of work it is pure and straightforward, truly *painted;* not sponged or washed; and in places completely finished. I cannot but suppose it is through mere accident and want of time that this principal subject (285) is so unequal in completion; portions of it are quite sketchy and coarse, while other portions of it even give hope that Mr. Fripp, may in due time not unworthily fill some of the places which John Lewis has left vacant on the walls. I feared at first, on seeing how the face and dress of the mother were wrought, while the arbour and architecture were neglected, that Mr. Fripp had not disentangled himself from the old fallacy about generalising subordinate parts, but I see with comfort that some subordinate parts—the cat, winking in the sun, and the pinks, for instance, on the right hand—are carried nearly to faultless completion. On the whole I think that passage nearly the best bit of painting in the room. It has no look of painful elaboration; shows no stipple or mannerism of touch; appears to be done easily as well as completely, and is quite beautiful in the conception of its pale colour in the sun. But much has to be done yet, Mr. Fripp. Our Italian mother is unsatisfactory; it is but smirking, not passionate, maternity; her gown is well drawn, but not her body; our old woman plays her part of monster too monstrously; our vines will never grow any grapes. We must have everything up to the cat's mark next year, please.

Then in the second place: Mr. Fripp's work is progressive in its system of shade, or rather of light. That Church of St. Olivano (37) which looks so strange in its paleness among all the old fashioned water-colours about it, has had its colours carefully matched with sunshine. Only it will never do to leave hard edges and thin washes, if we are going to paint in that key. Treble notes must not be sharp and thin; the higher they are the more tender they must be, and in a certain sense the richer; it is the rich trebles that are sweet and precious, not the meagre ones. The paler the

tone of a picture the more sweet must be its textures, and the more subtle its gradations; else it will always look like a strange half-finished sketch, not as this picture really is, a most truthful study of sunlight. What people usually suppose to be like sunlight in pictures is only like twilight or lamplight; this goes nearly as far towards Italian noonday as poor paper and colour can reach.

And in the third, but the chief place: all Mr. Fripp's pictures are well designed, their subjects being chosen with great sense of the moral force and meaning of every incident; even the small figures in this are entirely right in conception. But he has not yet enough knowledge of the figure to carry out his purposes; he is, indeed, quite in a transitional state, hesitating between landscape and figures. I think, chiefly in consequence of the way he has put in those monks of St. Olivano, that it will be quite worth his while to make the figures principal. No. 101, also, Evening on the Abruzzi mountains, is in idea a most beautiful picture; but of course neither the drawing of boy or dog is as yet possible to the artist; he must choose between retracting his figures into insignificance, and leaving only hills and clouds, or enabling himself, by a good hard year or two's work, to draw the figures rightly. I hope he will choose the steeper path.

244. Fungi. (*W. Hunt.*)

That we may have the pleasure of parting with words of unqualified praise, we must look last at this exquisite drawing, and therefore must glance, somewhat out of their order, at Mr. Palmer's "Going to India," 256, which looks at first cruder and harsher than it is, but gains by a long look, and has deep feeling in it; and so, taking what good there is on the screens as we pass (especially Carl Haag's "Arch at Spalatro," another of the save-trouble drawings which are as good as seeing the thing itself) to Mr. Hunt's "View from Richmond Hill," 306, very notable for its air, and sunshine, and quaint expression of the contentment of the worthy English middle classes in sitting on benches beside park palings: as well as for its expression of all the ugliest and intensely characteristic qualities of our English elms, and, indeed, of our English trees generally, which always appear to me, as compared with French trees, to grow in paroxysms of *mauvaise honte*, sticking out their elbows everywhere in the wrong places, and stiffening themselves against every

breeze that would bend them into grace, till all their leaves stand on end at last in sheer misery and shame at the shapes they have been got into. Then to the "Peach and Grapes," 314, wherein note the wonderful light in dark of the peach's dark side, and the subtle finish of composition by help of the strawberry, whose stalk follows and relieves the curve of the round peach, and with the raised point of its green receptacle (or whatever the botanists call it) expresses its sympathy, as far as a strawberry can, with the descending curve of the bunch of grapes. Then across to 232, one of the very noblest fruit pieces which Mr. Hunt ever painted; and look well at the green gages, and the brown spots in the shadow on them. How he gets that stalk, with all its faint colour, to stand out, as it clearly does, an inch from the plums, so that but for the glass, it is all but[1] morally certain we might lay hold of it, passes nearly all the mysteries of imitative painting I have seen. And thus, lastly, to these scarlet—no, not scarlet—nor crimson—nor in anywise speakably coloured fungi, for which, with a serious heart, I thank the painter, and with more thanks than I can give for any other picture here, as having best shown us the gracious splendour which there is in the meanest herb of the field.

[1] Not *quite* certain—there is a shade of doubt about its tangibility—just enough to keep it in its rank of noble painting. All entirely deceptive work is bad.

NOTES ON SOME OF

THE PRINCIPAL PICTURES

EXHIBITED IN THE ROOMS OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY

THE OLD AND NEW

SOCIETIES OF PAINTERS IN WATER-COLOURS

THE SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

AND THE FRENCH EXHIBITION

No. V.—1859

PREFACE

I HOPE henceforward to do without preface; for the real state of our schools in any given year cannot be described in few words, and after the most earnest analysis of the causes of advance or decline, the real result will always be inexplicable. Great painters will every now and then appear when no one expects them; or perhaps disappear suddenly through trap doors without any visible reason for their exit; and the critic can only congratulate in simplicity, or lament in amazement. The present Exhibition shows steady advance among the younger students; the more experienced masters, whether Academic or pre-Raphaelite, are either absent or indolent; but I have never seen the Academy walls show so high an average of good work.

NOTES

&c., &c.

EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY

12. Reminiscences of the Ball. (*G. D. Leslie.*)

It must be a great delight to Mr. Leslie to see his son do such good work as this. There is not a prettier little piece of painting on the walls, and very few half so pretty. All the accessories, too, are at once quaint and graceful: showing an enjoyment of elegance in form (even down to the design of the frame of the picture, and the bars of the chair,) which is very rare among the young painters of the rising school. This grace of fancy is shown no less in the little Chinese subject by the same artist (351), which, however, is not quite so thoroughly painted. I shall look anxiously for Mr. Leslie's work next year, for he seems to have truly the power of composition, and that is the gift of gifts if it be rightly used. He colours very well already.

13. A Boy in Florentine Costume. (*J. R. Hay.*)

Very masterly and complete in effect, and like the Val d'Arno: so also its companion, No. 173. But the intention of this latter is mistaken. An English boy, however luxuriously bred, has usually twenty times the firmness in his face that an Italian one has. Italian boys are beautiful—full of vitality and roguery; lazy, and, on the whole, well fed, wherever I have seen them. There is more misery of an outward and physical kind in a couple of London backstreets than in a whole Italian town. Mental degradation, not physical suffering, constitutes the slavery of Italy,—both constitute that of England. Italian slavery is infinitely grander than ours. The souls of Italy at least need iron bars to bind them; ours need only the threads of purses.

15. The Vale of Rest. (*J. E. Millais, A.*)

I have no doubt the beholder is considerably offended at first sight of this picture—justifiably so, considering what might once have been hoped for from its painter; but unjustifiably, if the offence taken prevents his staying by it;

for it deserves his study. "We are offended by it." Granted. Perhaps the painter did not mean us to be pleased. It may be that he supposed we should have been offended if we had seen the real nun digging her real grave;[1] that she and it might have appeared to us not altogether pathetic, romantic, or sublime; but only strange, or horrible; and that he chooses to fasten this sensation upon us rather than any other.

It is a temper into which many a good painter has fallen before now. You would not find it a pleasant thing to be left at twilight in the church of the Madonna of the Garden at Venice, with the last light falling on the skeletons—half alive, dreamy, stammering skeletons—shaking the dust off their ribs, in Tintoret's Last Judgment. Perhaps even you might not be at your ease before one or two pale crucifixes which I remember of Giotto's and other not mean men, where the dark red runlets twine and trickle from the feet down to the skull at the root of the cross. Many an ugly spectre and ghastly face has been painted by the gloomier German workmen before now, and been in some sort approved by us; nay, there is more horror by far, of a certain kind, in modern French works—Vernet's Eylau and Plague, and such like—which we do not hear any one declaim against—(nay, which seem to meet a large division of public taste,) than in this picture which so many people call "frightful."

Why *so* frightful? Is it not because it is so nearly beautiful?—Because the dark green field, and windless trees, and purple sky might be so lovely to persons unconcerned about their graves?

Or is it that the faces are so ugly? You would have liked them better to be fair faces, such as would grace a drawing-room, and the grave to be dug in prettier ground—under a rose-bush or willow, and in turf set with violets—nothing like a bone visible as one threw the mould out. So, it would have been a sweet piece of convent sentiment.

I am afraid that it is a good deal more like real convent sentiment as it is. Death—confessed for king before his time, asserts, so far as I have seen, some authority over such places; either unperceived, and then the worst,

[1] I believe, in point of fact, nuns neither dig their own graves, nor erect tombstones: but we will take the picture on its own terms.

in drowsy unquickening of the soul; or felt and terrible, pouring out his white ashes upon the heart—ashes that burn with cold. If you think what the kind of persons who have strength of conviction enough to give up the world, might have done for the world had they *not* given it up: and how the King of Terror must rejoice when he wins for himself another soul that might have gone forth to calm the earth; and folds his wide, white wings over it for ever: —He also gathering his children together; and how those white sarcophagi—towered and belfried, each with his companies of living dead, gleam still so multitudinous among the mountain pyramids of the fairest countries of the earth: places of silence for their sweet voices; places of binding for their faithfullest hands; places of fading for their mightiest intelligences:—you may, perhaps, feel also, that so great wrong cannot be lovely in the near aspect of it; and that if this very day, at evening, we were allowed to see what the last clouds of twilight glow upon in some convent garden of the Apennines, we might leave the place with some such horror as this picture will leave upon us; not all of it noble horror, but in some sort repulsive and ignoble.

It is, for these reasons, to me, a great work: nevertheless, part of its power is not to the painter's praise. The crude painting is here in a kind of harmony with the expression of discord which was needed. But it is crude—not in momentary compliance with the mood which prompted this wild design; but in apparent consistency of decline from the artist's earlier ways of labour. Pass to his other picture —the "Spring," and we find the colour not less abrupt, though more vivid.

And when we look at this fierce and rigid orchard,—this angry blooming—petals, as it were, of japanned brass; and remember the lovely wild roses and flowers scattered on the stream in the "Ophelia;" there is, I regret to say, no ground for any diminution of the doubt which I expressed two years since, respecting the future career of a painter who can fall thus strangely beneath himself.

The power has not yet left him. With all its faults, and they are grievous, this is still mighty painting: nothing else is as strong, or approximately as strong, within these walls. But it is a phenomenon, so far as I know, unparalleled hitherto in art-history, that any workman capable

of so much should rest content with so little. All former art, by men of any intellect, has been wrought, under whatever limitations of time, as well as the painter could do it; evidently with an effort to reach something beyond what was actually done: if a sketch, the sketch showed a straining towards completion; if a picture, it showed a straining to a higher perfection; but here, we have a careless and insolent indication of things that might be—not the splendid promise of a grand impatience, but the scrabbled remnant of a scornfully abandoned aim.

And this wildness of execution is strangely associated with the distortion of feature which more or less has been sought for by this painter from his earliest youth; just as it was by Martin Schongauer and Mantegna. In the first picture (from Keat's Isabella) which attracted public attention, the figure in the foreground writhed in violence of constrained rage: in the picture of the "Holy Family at Nazareth," the Virgin's features were contorted in sorrow over a wounded hand; violent ugliness of feature spoiled a beautiful arrangement of colour in the "Return of the Dove," and disturbed a powerful piece of dramatic effect in the "Escape from the Inquisition." And in this present picture, the unsightliness of some of the faces, and the preternatural grimness of others, with the fierce colour and angular masses of the flowers above, force upon me a strange impression, which I cannot shake off—that this is an illustration of the song of some modern Dante, who, at the first entrance of an inferno for English society, had found, carpeted with ghostly grass, a field of penance for young ladies; where girl-blossoms, who had been vainly gay, or treacherously amiable, were condemned to recline in reprobation under red-hot apple blossom, and sip scalding milk out of a poisoned porringer.

40. The Night before Naseby. (*A. L. Egg, A.*)

An interesting contribution to the store of hints for better understanding of English history which painters and poets are now continually throwing out for us. This scene is, however, hardly strange enough to have the look of reality: it is what we should, or could, all imagine about Cromwell; while most likely, if we had really been able to look into his tent the night before Naseby, the look of him would have been something different from what we should have

imagined. A picture which is not at first a little wonderful to us, can hardly at last be true to us.

63. A Huff. (*J. Phillip.*)

Full of powerful and dexterous painting; but ungraceful, and slightly vulgar. This last character is given chiefly by the brilliancy of petticoat and chenille, prevailing at once over passions, faces, and landscape. It is, indeed, quite right to elaborate details; but not the ignoblest details first and best. All! or none. If chenille, then, *à fortiori*—orange bough and blossom; if blue petticoat, *à fortiori*—blue sky. The orange tree, it might be said, would have spoiled the faces if it had been made out? Then put something behind them that will not spoil them, but always paint it well, whatever it is.

95. The late Captain Sir Charles Hotham. (*G. Richmond, A.*)

This is a very noble portrait; full of simple and manly character; vigorous and complete in workmanship: but all the best of it is here lost, and what deficiency exists in its dark colour brought out, both by its height above the eye, and by the neighbourhood of the white dresses in the portraits beneath it; and thus a great injustice is done to the painter, and a real loss (for it is a serious one not to see this admirably wrought head better) caused to the public, merely for the sake of the symmetries of the saloon; that a diagonal line of general in No. 95, may balance a diagonal line of lady in No. 69. In the Louvre, at this moment, the French use their best old pictures, the treasures of Europe, in the same way, and hang Titian's and Rubens' portraits to balance each other, forty feet above the eye. Such treatment of great pictures is simply, and in the full sense of the word, "savage;" such things cannot be done, whether by us here, or by the French in the Louvre, but in a clownish ignorance of the meaning of the word "picture;" and of the entire value and purpose of painting. And, indeed, when the pictures are wholly precious and perfect, like the Titian with the red capped St. Joseph, which the French have hung high out of sight in the Louvre, or like the Sir Joshua's Holy Family which we have thrust into the darkest room in Marlborough House, "clownish" is not a strong enough word for the mischief; "savage" is the accurate expression. A clown buys ornaments for his

cottage chimney-piece, without much understanding of their merit as works of art, but at least he puts them where he can see them. But your savage, to whom, after much polite and instructive conversation about England, thinking to deepen the impression on his mind, you make a present of miniatures of the Queen and Prince Albert, presently attaches the Queen to one ear, and Prince Albert to the other, and dances round you with a howl. We two great nations, French and English, "wear" our noble pictures precisely in this manner.

It is to be hoped that in the arrangement of the building about to be raised for the occupation of the Academy, the fact may be at last acknowledged, that a picture which is worth seeing at all is worth seeing well; that a picture gallery needs space, but not height,—and rational sequence, not overwhelming concentration, of its treasures.

The portrait of the Dean of Westminster, No. 510, shows Mr. Richmond's power more satisfactorily.

113. Clarkson Stanfield, Esq., R.A. (*D. Macnee.*)

A good portrait; only Mr. Stanfield's eyes are more piercing, even in general, and must be especially so when he is sketching. And surely the portrait of a landscape painter ought to have a background. Velasquez always allows his admirals a little sea; might not Mr. Stanfield have had at least a rock and a wave.

135. Waiting for the Ferry Boat.—Upper Egypt (*J. F. Lewis, A.*)

Well, of course, it is very nice. Housings and camels—palm trees—clouds, and Sheik. But waiting for a ferry boat is dull work; and are we never to get out of Egypt any more? nor to perceive the existence of any living creatures but Arabs and camels? Is there nothing paintable in England, nor Spain, nor Italy? Or, in the East, if we *must* live in the East, is no landscape ever visible but a dead level of mud raised two feet above a slow stream. I have heard of lovely hills and convents at Athos—of green trees and flowing waters at Damascus—of mighty rocks at Petra and Mount Hor—of wonderful turrets and enamelled walls at Cairo; surely the mosaic of a marble turret is as pretty a thing to paint as a camel-housing; and it would take no more trouble to draw the ridges of an Arabian mountain than the folds of that everlasting Sheik's cloak

We go to this melancholy Egypt through plague, and mosquitos, and misery of every sort—and all we see for our pains is a camel with a fine carpet on his back. Cannot we see that any day at the Zoological Gardens? But the Sphinx, and the temples, and the hieroglyphics, and the mirage, and simoom; and everything that we want to know about, and that one would be so thankful to have painted properly;—shall we never have any of these? It is too unkind of you, Mr. Lewis; and it serves you quite right to be put up there, where nobody can see a bit of your good work, but only your dull subject. But what is this we have got put underneath you, which looks like a tobacconist's sign; a valuable work it is to be hoped—let us see.

137. The Fusee. (*A. Cooper, R.A.*)

The sublime of English art, truly! A lake, with ingenious white touches at the edges, to mark it from the mountains; some rocks of leather; sky-blue heather; wooden-headed people, displaying themselves in the athletic exercise of smoking, and a pool of water, with vertical reflections of sloping lines! A superb art lesson for the line of the Academy—heroic and optical at once; it is interesting, especially, to see that, in the present state of British science, one may write R.A. after one's name, yet not be able to paint a gutter.

160. The Church of Sta. Maria della Salute. (*D. Roberts, R.A.*)

My dear Mr. Roberts, *is* this like a church built of white Carrara marble? La Salute is verily as white as snow in some places; black-spotted or ochre-spotted in others; but delicate and lovely everywhere. And then the gondoliers! still always where they couldn't possibly row! It would be very comfortable for gondoliers if they might stand in the middle of the boat close by the canopy; but to their sorrow, sometimes to their misfortune, they must stand far back, poised on the point of the giddy stern. I say "sometimes to their misfortune," for, as if specially to illustrate Mr. Leslie's[1] declaration, in defence of Canaletto against some fault-finding of mine, that the water "as it approached the houses was sheltered from the breeze," my strongest gondolier was blown off his perch into the canal

[1] Handbook for Young Painters, p. 269.

at my own door one day, just opposite this very church, and had nearly been brained against the doorstep.

I much regret Mr. Robert's abandonment of his old picturesque subjects for these severe ones. He had a great gift of expressing the ins and outs of Spanish balconies and roofs, and the hollow work of complex tracery, and all his skill of this kind is now passing away into formal architectural drawing in brown and grey. His old painting of the spires of Burgos Cathedral—of its turreted chapter-house—the tombs of Ferdinand and Isabella—the towers and courts of the Alhambra, &c., involved points of interest and displays of skill which none of his subjects at present either contain or admit; while their generally smaller size prevented the painter's wearying at his work, and enabled us to have five or six subjects each year instead of two.

165. Mary Magdalen. (*J. R. Herbert, R.A.*)

Very beautiful, and an interesting example of the noble tendency of modern religious art to conceive scenes as they really in probability occurred; not in merely artistic modification or adaptation.

The picture tells its story sufficiently, and needs no comment. It is not of high artistic merit, but a sincere and gentle conception, adequately, and therefore very touchingly, expressed.

167. "Just as the Twig is Bent." (*W. Mulready, R.A.*)

I see that this picture has been depreciatingly spoken of in several of the journals. I think unjustly so. It is as good as Mr. Mulready's work usually is. I had occasion last year to point out the general defect of that work—namely, that the painter is evidently thinking only of himself and his drawing—never caring the least about what he has to draw; of which, therefore, he misses precisely the most valuable characters, and succeeds in using more skill in painting Nothing than any painter ever spent before on that subject.

If the trees in the background are supposed to be typical of education, they ought to have been better grown. Mr. Mulready's trees are often supposed by artists to be well drawn, merely because they are well *rounded*. But they are, nevertheless, mannered in execution, and false in tree anatomy.

190. Barley Harvest on the Welsh Coast. (*C. P. Knight.*)

A delightful subject, forcibly, because harmoniously,

rendered, though without any subtlety of execution. I am glad to observe how much the public enjoy a piece of plain fact like this, plainly told; and how they rejoice in their gradual discovery that ground may be golden and sea blue, no less than brown and grey.

211. Jeanie Deans and Queen Caroline. (*C. R. Leslie, R.A.*)

The more I learn of art, the more respect I feel for Mr. Leslie's painting, as such; and for the way it brings out the expressional result he requires. Given, a certain quantity of oil colour to be laid with one touch of pencil, so as to produce at once the subtlest and largest expressional result possible, and there is no man now living who seems to me to come at all near Mr. Leslie, his work being, in places, equal to Hogarth for decision, and here and there a little lighter and more graceful (Hogarth always laying his colour somewhat in daubs and spots). But I am obliged to write above, "the result he (Mr. Leslie) requires," as being very completely distinguished from the result that other people might possibly require. So long, indeed, as Mr. Leslie is dealing only with delicate, lady-like, or gentleman-like expression, he is a consummately faithful artist. I cannot help referring once more to his exquisite Belinda and her lover, in his "Rape of the Lock," as types of all that can be asked in such painting; and in this picture before us—the Queen,—and still more the dark-robed Lady Suffolk, are quite beautiful; as also in No. 152, Lady Percy. But Jeanie, here! and Harry, there!! Alas, the day! Examine the two pictures well; they are amongst the most instructive that ever yet appeared on the Academy walls, in showing the possibility of entering completely into the spirit of the gracefulnesses of society, without the power of conceiving Heroism. To a certain extent, the mind of Reynolds was of this stamp. He could conceive a most refined lord or lady, but not a saint or Madonna; and his best hero, Lord Heathfield, is but an obstinate old English gentleman after all.

Gainsborough takes very nearly the same view of us. Hogarth laughs at or condemns us. Leslie, accustomed to high English life, supposes that this was Harry Percy's way of wearing his spurs. Is it not a rather strange matter, that our seers or painters, contemplating the English nation,

cannot, all of them put together, paint an English hero? Nothing more than an English gentleman in an obstinate state of mind about keys; with an expression which I can conceive so exceedingly stout a gentleman of that age as occasionally putting on, even respecting the keys of the cellaret. Pray, consider of it a little, good visitors to the Royal Academy in the afternoon, whether it is altogether the painter's fault, or anybody else's!

237. A Maltese Xebec, on the Rocks of Procida. (*C. Stanfield, R.A.*)

It is rather singular that the castle of Ischia, which appears in the distance of this picture, is almost the only piece of really picturesque architecture which is to be found on the Academy walls this year.

It is not, perhaps, one of Mr. Stanfield's best works, but his mountain forms are always true and bold; and after infinite and infinitesimal calls upon one's sympathy from leaves and dragonflies, one is glad of a piece of solid rock and wall, about which one is not expected to "feel" anything particular.

310. Sunday in the Backwoods. (*T. Faed.*)

This will, of course, be a very popular picture, and deserves to be so, having every claim to our observance which kindly feeling and steady average painting can give it. It does not possess any first-rate qualities; but has no serious faults, and much gentle pathos. The figure of the healthy sister, looking up, seems to me the best.

316. The Rose Garland. (*W. C. T. Dobson.*)

Evidently a most faithful portrait (colour only excepted) of a dear, good little girl—such an one as may be seen often enough, Heaven be praised! at cottage-doors in England, or in France, or in Germany, or in Switzerland, or, I suppose, in Sweden. South of the Alps or Pyrenees, or east of the Carpathians, one finds that kind of face no more. What does that peculiar northern sweetness consist in, which never showed itself, even to Giotto, nor to Raphael?—their beauty being of another kind wholly; more pensive, less wise, and less active.

329. Felice Ballarin reciting Tasso. (*F. Goodall, A.*)

This is a great advance beyond all Mr. Goodall's former work; it is entirely higher in aim, and deeper in rendering of character: the subject interesting; the faces, for the

most part, evidently portraits, and good portraits (especially those dark ones of the men in the background), the colour, in some separate portions, rich and good, showing qualities which never before appeared to be in the least sought for, much less reached by the painter. In fact, Mr. Goodall has been looking at Titian instead of Wilkie, and that makes a large difference in what will be got by looking.

Nevertheless the picture is far from right yet; and its failure involves an important principle, which it may be of use to state generally, at a time when nearly all our younger painters are making those vigorous efforts in new directions. It is wholly impossible to paint an effect of sunlight truly. It never has been done, and never will be. Sunshine is brighter than any mortal can paint, and all resemblances to it must be obtained by sacrifice. In order to obtain a popularly effective sunlight, colour must be sacrificed. De Hoogh, Cuyp, Claude, Both, Richard Wilson, and all other masters of sunshine, invariably reach their most telling effects by harmonies of gold with grey, giving up the blues, rubies, and freshest greens. Turner did the same in his earlier work. Modern Pre-Raphaelites, and Turner in his later work, reached magnificent effects of sunshine colour, but of a kind necessarily unintelligible to the ordinary observer (as true sunshine colour will always be, since it is impossible to paint it of the pitch of light which has true relation to its shadows). And thus the "Sun of Venice," and the "Slave Ship," with Hunt's "Two Gentlemen of Verona," "Stray Sheep," and such others, failed of almost all their due effect on the popular mind.

In landscape, nevertheless, to which sunshine is often necessary as part of its expression, the sacrifice must be made; and the public will, in time, understand it. But in figures, sunshine is rarely a necessary part of the expression; and all figure pictures in which it is introduced must be, to a certain extent, offensive. The obstinate endeavours of the Pre-Raphaelites, to get vermilion transparencies and purple shadows into flesh, have been one of the principal and most justifiable grounds of the long opposition to them. And all great work whatsoever, of the highest school, refuses sunlight; and admits only a kind of glowing twilight, like that of Italy, a quarter of an hour after sunset.

Under these circumstances, choice must be made firmly

and completely. Give up your sunlight, and you may get Titian's twilight. Give up your Titianesque depth, and you may, by thorough study from nature, get some approximation to noonday flame. But you cannot have both. Mr. Goodall has attempted both, and, of course, missed both—chiefly his sunshine, from mere inattention to its effects. For instance, the woman sitting on the right, with the green petticoat, has her lap in sunshine, her head in shade. Whatever light touches the head would be reflected light, and it would be reflected from the ground, shining strongly under her brows and on the lower part of her face; instead of which there is a shadow under the brow, exactly as if she were sitting in a room with ordinary daylight entering from above through a window. The picture is full of grammatical error of the same kind—the kind of error which in these days of earnest and accurate science, artists should get quit of with their long-clothes and spelling-books; whereas now, to the middle or even the close of life, they remain encumbered among petty misunderstandings, and wondering why they cannot make their art beautiful, when they have never taken the pains to make it right. There are, of course, just three simple stages of study to be gone through by every student. He has first to learn to draw a solid body in perfect light and shade, without sunlight. Then to paint it, also without sunlight; taking subjects that will give no trouble about their expression or sentiment. Then to put it into sunshine, and paint it there also, until he knows precisely the kind of difference in treatment required for it. And then—not till then—he may be able partially to colour the human face.

All this is just as simple and rational in method of procedure as practising scales in music before we try to play sonatas. But we always try to learn our painting upside down.

368. The Evening Song. (*A. Rankling.*)

A pretty thought, but not well enough painted. The sky has been caught from nature; but with too little precision; the perspective of the retiring ranks of cloud being missed.

Are our village children taught at present to sing the evening hymn in such an obstreperous manner as to frighten the geese?

369. Luff, Boy! (*J. C. Hook, A.*)

War with France? It may be; and they say good ships are building at Cherbourg. War with Russia? That also is conceivable; and the Russians invent machines that explode under water by means of knobs. War with the fiend in ourselves? That may not so easily come to pass, he and we being in close treaty hitherto, yet perhaps in good time may be looked for. And against enemies, foreign or internal, French, Sclavonic, or demoniac, what arms have we to count upon? I hear of good artillery practice at Woolwich,—of new methods of sharpening sabres invented by Sikhs,—of a modern condition of the blood of Nessus, which sets sails on fire, and makes an end of Herculean ships, like Phœnixes. All which may perhaps be well, or perhaps ill, for us. But, if our enemies want to judge of our proved weapons and armour, let them come and look here. Bare head, bare fist, bare foot, and blue jacket. If these will not save us—nothing will.

A glorious picture—most glorious—"Hempen bridle, and horse of tree." Nay, rather, backs of the blue horses, foam-fetlocked, rearing beside us as we ride, tossing their tameless crests, with deep-drawn thunder in their overtaking tread. I wonder if Mr. Hook when he drew that boy thought of the Elgin marbles; the helmetless, unsworded, unarmoured men of Marathon. I think not: the likeness is too lovely to be conscious; it is all the more touching. They also, the men of Marathon, horsemen riding upon horses, given them of the Sea God. The earth struck by the trident takes such shape—a white wave, with its foaming mane and its crested head, made living for them.

And the quiet steersman, too, with his young brow knit, to whom father and brother are trusted—and more than they. I would we had such faithful arms, however feeble, at all helms.

Infinite thanks, Mr. Hook, for this;—for our Brook of Human Life also (250), and our Hours of listless Sway on gentle Wave (493). All of them beautiful. The distant landscape in that brook scene is one of the sweetest ever found by painter—for found it evidently is—not composed; as well as Mr. Redgrave's beautiful distance in 218.

390. Barley Harvest. (*H. C. Whaite.*)

Very exquisite in nearly every respect; perhaps, take it

all in all, the most covetable bit of landscape of this year, and showing good promise, it seems to me, if the painter does not overwork himself needlessly. The execution of the whole by minute and similar touches is a mistake; certain textures need to be so produced, and certain complexities of form, but the work is never good unless it varies with every part of the subject, and is different in method, according to the sort of surface or form required. Nothing finished can be done without labour; but a picture can hardly be more injured than by the quantity of labour in it which is lost. Uncontributive toil is one of the forms of ruin.

Mr. Whaite's drawing, 1,001 is also very lovely in conception, and right in form of cloud. It is slightly affected by the same error as the oil-painting. Compare with it the interesting study opposite, by Mr. A. W. Hunt (997), entirely well meant, but suffering under the same oppression of plethoric labour. I do not often, in the present state of the English school, think it advisable to recommend "breadth," but assuredly both Mr. Whaite and Mr. Hunt, if they wish to do themselves justice, ought to give up colour for a little while, and work with nothing but very ill-made charcoal, which will not cut to a point.

While we are examining these minor landscapes, it is worth while returning to the west room to glance at Mr. Raven's "Saintfoin in bloom," (574,) which is more easy in touch, and very harmonious in the light and shade of the figures; and at Mr. Oake's richly, but vainly wrought foreground, with nothing beyond it. (525.)

Mr. Boyce's "East Lynn" (682) is of higher temper. It is curious how few people seem to feel the solemn difference between sun and shade—in the breadth of both, which he has endeavoured to render there. Many other studies of great interest may be found scattered on the walls, in which, while there is much to be admired, this is generally to be regretted, that the painters, not being able to do their work entirely well, think to make progress by doing a great quantity of work moderately well, which will by no means answer the purpose. We cannot learn to paint leaves by painting trees-full; nor grass by painting fields-full. Learning to paint one leaf rightly is better than constructing a whole forest of leaf definitions.

441. God's Gothic. (*Miss A. Blunden.*)

An entirely earnest and very notable study. It looks hard at first (and indeed *is* a little hard at last); but the appearance of too conspicuous green in the sea, which principally causes the harshness, will be found to diminish after a steady look; the fact being that the sea is often of this colour, only the bright sunlight of nature, which no painting can equal, accounts for it to our sensations. But if Miss Blunden can make her handling a little more tender, the colour may be as bright without looking wrong. She has tried hard, not without fair success, to express the rise of the wave—hardly visible in the long swell—till the foam shows at its edge; the wet shingle is also very good; the boat well drawn; and the beds of pointed "Gothic" wonderfully true in bend, as well as various in colour.

480. The Burgesses of Calais. (*H. Holiday.*)

A well-conceived and interesting scene: the face of the knight successful; that of the wife is a little beyond the painter's strength. It is a fair representation of the class of pictures now produced in numbers by the advancing school, which, with considerable merit, have the general demerit of making us feel in an instant that they would never have been painted had not others shown how; and the greater demerit of slightly blunting the enjoyment of the work of original men. Nevertheless, in every school these engrafted pictures must exist; and it is a cause for sincere congratulation when the habit which is becoming derivatively universal, is to read human nature and history with sympathy for nobleness, and desire for truth.

492. The Rev. F. D. Maurice. (*L. Dickinson.*)

Like, and good; an entirely well-meant and well-wrought portrait; coming a little hard, in consequence of the endeavour to paint all the expression of an expressive face; but it is a good fault. Our portraits are in general wanting in power, owing to a misunderstanding of Sir Joshua; and the idea that his playful tenderness and easy precision are imitable by slovenliness.

Generally speaking, portraiture may be divided into three great schools: the greatest is the Venetian, headed by Titian, and entirely right; on one side of it, is the German school, headed by Holbein, erring slightly on the side of

intenseness and force of definition; on the other side of it, the English school, headed by Sir Joshua, erring slightly on the side of facility and grace of abstraction.[1] Now, the Venetians and Sir Joshua are, for the present, wholly inimitable; but Holbein is imitable, and is the best model for us.

609. The King's Orchard. (*A. Hughes.*)

Mr. Hughes' exquisite sense of colour and delicacy of design are seen to less advantage than usual. He has been allowing himself to go astray by indulging too much in his chief delight of colour; and this picture, which was quite lovely when I saw it last year incomplete, is now throughout too gay, and wanting in sweetness of shade; but most accomplished and delicious in detached passages; and the apple-blossom, among all its ruddy rivals on the walls this year, is tenderly, but triumphantly, victorious—it is the only blossom which is soft enough in texture, or round enough in bud. There is the making of a magnificent painter in Mr. Hughes: but he must for some time yet stoop to conquer; be content with cottagers' instead of kings' orchards, and bow to the perhaps distressing, but assured fact, that a picture can be no more wholly splendid than it can be wholly white.

900. Too Late. (*W. L. Windus.*)

Something wrong here: either this painter has been ill:[2] or his picture has been sent in to the Academy in a hurry; or he has sickened his temper and dimmed his sight by reading melancholy ballads. There is great grandeur in the work; but it cannot for a moment be compared with Burd Helen. On the whole, young painters must remember this great fact, that painting, as a mere physical exertion, requires the utmost possible strength of constitution and of heart. A stout arm, a calm mind, a merry heart, and a bright eye are essential to a great painter. Without all these he can, in a great and immortal way, do nothing.

Wherefore, all puling and pining over deserted ladies, and knights run through the body, is, to the high artistic

[1] For the sake of simplicity of conception, Velasquez must be classed with the Venetians, to whom he belongs in right of his style, and Vandyck with the English; in fact, he, with Sir Joshua and Gainsborough, constitute the whole school.

[2] I fear this has been the fact. See the postscript, at the end of these pages.

aculty, just so much poison. Frequent the company of ght-minded and noble-souled persons; learn all athletic xercises, and all delicate arts; music more especially; orment yourselves neither with fine philosophy nor im- atient philanthropy—but be kind and just to everybody; se in the morning with the lark, and whistle in the evening ith the blackbird; and in time you may be a painter. Not therwise.

908. Val d'Aosta. (*J. Brett.*)

Yes, here we have it at last—some close-coming to it at east—historical landscape, properly so-called,—landscape ainting with a meaning and a use. We have had hitherto lenty of industry, precision quite unlimited—but all useless, r nearly so, being wasted on scenes of no majesty or en- uring interest. Here is, at last, a scene worth painting—ainting with all our might: (not quite with all our heart, erhaps, but with might of hand and eye). And here, ac- ordingly, for the first time in history, we have, by help of rt, the power of visiting a place, reasoning about it, and nowing it, just as if we were there, except only that we can- ot stir from our place, nor look behind us. For the rest, tanding before this picture is just as good as standing on hat spot in Val d'Aosta, so far as gaining of knowledge is oncerned; and perhaps in some degree pleasanter, for it ould be very hot on that rock to-day, and there would robably be a disagreeable smell of juniper plants growing n the slopes above.

So if any simple-minded, quietly-living person, indisposed owards railroad stations or crowded inns, cares to know in n untroublous and uncostly way what a Piedmontese valley like in July, there it is for him. Rocks overlaid with velvet nd fur to stand on in the first place. If you look close nto the velvet you will find it is jewelled and set with stars n a stately way. White poplars by the road-side, shaking lvery in the wind. I regret to say the wind is apt to come p the Val d'Aosta in an ill-tempered and rude manner, urning leaves thus the wrong side out; but it will be over n a moment. Beyond the poplars you may see the slopes of rable and vineyard ground, such as give the wealth and fe to Italy which she idly trusts in. Ground laid ages ago n wreaths, like new cut hay by the mountain streams, now erraced and trimmed into all gentle service. If you want

to know what vines look like under an Italian training (far from the best), *that* is the look of them—the dark spots and irregular cavities, seen through the broken green of their square-set ranks, distinguishing them at any distance from the continuous pale fields of low set staff and leaf, divided by no gaps of gloom, which clothe a true vine country. There, down in the mid-valley, you see what pasture and meadow-land we have, we Piedmontese, with our hamlet and cottage life, and groups of glorious wood. Just beyond the rock are two splendid sweet chestnut trees, with forming fruit, good for making bread of, no less than maize; lower down, far to the left, a furlong or two of the main stream with its white shore and alders: not beautiful, for it has come down into all this fair country from the Cormayeur glaciers, and is yet untamed, cold, and furious, incapable of rest. But above, there is rest, where the sunshine streams into iridescence through branches of pine, and turns the pastures into strange golden clouds, half grass half dew; for the shadows of the great hills have kept the dew there since morning. Rest also, calm enough, among the ridges of rock and forest that heap themselves into that purple pyramid, high on the right. Look well into the making of it—it is indeed so, that a great mountain is built and bears itself, and its forest fringes, and village jewels—for those white spots far up the ravine are villages—and peasant dynasties are hidden among the film of blue. And above all are other more desolate dynasties—the crowns that cannot shake—of jagged rock; they also true and right, even to their finest serration. So it is, that the snow lies on those dark diadems for ever. A notable picture truly; a possession of much within a few feet square.

Yet not, in the strong, essential meaning of the word, a noble picture. It has a strange fault, considering the school to which it belongs,—it seems to me wholly emotionless. I cannot find from it that the painter loved, or feared, anything in all that wonderful piece of the world. There seems to me no awe of the mountains there—no real love of the chestnuts or the vines. Keenness of eye and fineness of hand as much as you choose; but of emotion, or of intention, nothing traceable. Not but that I believe the painter to be capable of the highest emotion: anyone who can paint thus must have passion within him; but the

passion here is assuredly not out of him. He has cared for nothing, except as it was more or less pretty in colour and form. I never saw the mirror so held up to nature: but it is Mirror's work, not Man's. This absence of sentiment is peculiarly indicated by the feeble anger of the sky. Had it been wholly cloudless—burning down in one calm field of light behind the purple hills, all the rest of the landscape would have been gathered into unity by its repose; and for the sleeping girl we should have feared no other disturbance than the bleating of the favourite of her flock, who has returned to seek her—his companions wandering forgetful: but now she will be comfortlessly waked by hailstorm in another quarter of an hour: and yet there is no majesty in the clouds, nor any grand incumbency of them on the hills; they are but a dash of mist, gusty and disagreeable enough—in no otherwise to be dreaded; highly un-divine clouds—incognizant of Olympus—what have they to do here upon the hill thrones—*κορυφαῖς ἱεραῖς χιονοβλήτοισι*.

Historical landscape it is, unquestionably; meteorological also; poetical—by no means: yet precious, in its patient way; and, as a wonder of toil and delicate handling, unimpeachable. There is no such subtle and precise work on any other canvas here. The chestnut trees are like a finished design of Dürer's; every leaf a study: the poplar trunks and boughs drawn with an unexampled exquisiteness of texture and curve. And if it does not touch you at first, stay by it a little—look well at the cottage among the meadows—think of all that this Italian life might be among these sacred hills, and of what Italian life has been, and yet is, in spite of silver crosses on the breast, and how far it is your fault and mine that this is so: and the picture may be serviceable to you in quite other ways than by pleasing your eyes with purple and gold.

POSTSCRIPT

It is one of the most difficult and painful duties which I have to perform in these Notes, to guard the public against supposing that works executed under circumstances accidentally unfavourable, are characteristic of a school, without at

the same time hurting the artist's feelings deeply, just when all discouragement is most dangerous to him. I cannot, in justice to the Pre-Raphaelite school, allow Mr. Windus' picture—he being one of its chief leaders—to be looked upon as an example of what that school may achieve; but I trust that he will accept the assurance of my deep respect for his genius; and of my conviction that, with returning strength, he may one day take highest rank among masters of expression.

By inadvertency, I omitted in the arrangement of these detached notes, the reference made to Mr. Campbell's wonderful and all but perfect study, "Our Village Clockmaker" (14), full of various power; but perhaps challenging difficulties of detail too manifestly: and to Mr. Calderon's "Lost and Found" (634), which, if the face of the mother had been but a little more beautiful, would have been one of the most touching, as it is one of the most able, pictures of the year.

I cannot criticise my friend Mr. Watts' picture, "Isabella" (438); it is full of beauty and thoughtfulness. I have no doubt that he knows its faults better than I do; and they are so slight that the public ought not to see them, but to admire it with all their hearts.

WATER COLOUR SOCIETIES

A SOMEWHAT singular circumstance has taken place this year, in the choice of their principal or masterpiece by two important societies of English artists.

The Society of British Artists placed, as the central attraction of their rooms, an illustration of Shakespeare.[1] The New Water Colour Society honoured with a similarly central position an illustration of Tennyson.[2]

Duly allowing for privileges of seniority and presidentship, it would not be just towards either body of artists, if

[1] No. 53. Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. (F. Y. Hurlstone.)

[2] No. 212. A Dream of Fair Women. (E. H. Corbould.) The illustrations of Shakespeare by Mr. Gilbert, which occupy a conspicuous position (on each side of Mr. Burton's centre piece) in the rooms of the Old Water Colour Society, curiously involve that society also in a parallel manifestation of opinion.

we supposed that the places assigned to these works of art were entirely trustworthy indications of the estimate formed of them. But whether promoted by law, by courtesy, or by admiration, those pictures stood forth to the English—and more than the English, public—as in some central or typical way exponents of the power of the two societies; and foreigners, at least, would be justified in concluding that the sanction given by two important bodies of English painters to these readings of the greatest dead, and greatest living, English poets, indicated with some truth the measure of general understanding of poetry in the artist mind of the country; and perhaps also (as the appeal to public judgment was made so frankly) something of the public mind of this country on the same matter.

I am not going to criticise those pictures. If the reader is not of my mind about them, I should not have any hope of being able to make him so—nor even any wish to make him so. If he *is* of my mind about them, he will understand why they should have set me thinking—not on the whole pleasurably—of the course and probable prospects of the curious group of English Personages to whom art now addresses itself. For it would not be difficult to show, if necessary, that these two works do verily express the final and entirely typical issue of the most popular modern views on the subject of poetry in general: and more than this, there is a certain typical character even in the hero and heroines of the pictures—the "Hamlet," not unworthily representing what is popularly considered as Philosophy; the "Jephthah's Daughter," what is popularly accepted as Piety; and the "Cleopatra," what is popularly displayed as Splendour.

Or, in a nearer and narrower view, these pictures contain a concentrated expression of the character which distinguishes a modern English exhibition of paintings from every other that has yet been, or is likely to be. Bad painting is to be found in abundance everywhere, so that we do not distinguish ourselves by our weakness; foolish painting in greater abundance still, so that we do not distinguish ourselves by our imbecility; more or less meritorious painting, at least in all principal French and German schools, as well as in ours, so that we do not distinguish ourselves by our merit: but purely and wholly vulgar painting is not to be found

developing itself elsewhere with the same naïveté as among the English, and we *do* distinguish ourselves by our vulgarity. So, at least, it appears to me. As I have just said, I do not wish to argue with any one who disputes the fact, but to trace thence one or two conclusions with those who admit it.

What vulgarity is, whether in manners, acts, or conceptions, most well-educated persons understand; but what it consists in, or arises from, is a more difficult question. I believe that on strict analysis it will be found definable as "the habit of mind and act resulting from the prolonged combination of insensibility with insincerity:"[1] and I think the special manifestation of it among artists has resulted, in the first place, from the withdrawal of all right, and therefore all softening or animating, motive for their work; and, in the second place, from the habit of assuming, or striving by rule to express, feelings which did not, and could not, arise out of their work under such conditions.

I say first, by the withdrawal of all softening or animating motive, and chiefly by the loss of belief in the spiritual world. Art has never shown, in any corner of the earth, a condition of advancing strength but under this influence. I do not say, observe, influence of "religion," but merely of a belief in some invisible power—god or goddess, fury or fate, saint or demon. Where such belief existed, however sunk or distorted, progressive art has been possible, otherwise impossible. The distortion of the belief, its contraction or its incoherence, contract or compress the resultant art; still the art is evermore of another and mightier race than the art of materialism. Be so much of a Pythagorean

[1] It would be more accurate to say, "constitutional insensibility;" for people are born vulgar, or not vulgar, irrevocably. An apparent insensibility may often be caused by one strong feeling quenching or conquering another; and this to the extent of involving the person in all kinds of cruelty and crime—yet, Borgia, or Ezzelin, lady and knight still; while the born clown is dead in all sensation and capacity of thought, whatever his acts or life may be.

Cloten, in "Cymbeline," is the most perfect study of pure vulgarity which I know in literature; Perdita, in "Winter's Tale," the most perfect study of its opposite (irrespective of such higher virtue or intellect as we have in Desdemona or Portia). Perdita's exquisite openness, joined with as exquisite sensitiveness, constitute the precise opposite of the apathetic insincerity which, I believe, is the essence of vulgarity.

as to believe in something awful and impenetrable connected with beans, and forthwith you are not weaker, but stronger, than your kitchen-maid, who perceives in them only an adaptability to being boiled. Be so much of an Egyptian as to believe that some god made hawks, and bears up their wings for them on the wind, and looks for ever through the fierce light of their eyes, that therefore it is not good to slay hawks; and some day you may be able to paint a hawk quite otherwise than will be possible to you by any persistency in slaughter or dissection, or help of any quantity of stuffing and glass beads in thorax or eye-socket. Be so much of a Jew as to believe that there is a great Spirit who makes the tempests his true messengers, and the flaming fire his true servant, and lays the beams of his chambers upon the unshrinking sea, and you will paint the cloud, and the fire, and the wave, otherwise, and on the whole better, than in any state of modern enlightenment as to the composition of caloric or protoxide of hydrogen. Or, finally, be so much of a human creature as to care about the heart and history of fellow-creatures, and to take so much concern with the facts of human life going on around you as shall make your art in some sort compassionate, exhortant, or communicative: and useful to any one coming after you, either as a record of what was done among men in your day, or as a testimony of what you felt or knew concerning them and their misdoings or undoings: and this love and dwelling in the spirits of other creatures will give a glory to your work quite unattainable by observance of any proportions of arms and collar-bones hitherto stated by professors of Man-painting. All this is irrevocably so; and since, as a nation concerning itself with art, we have wholly rejected these heathenish, Jewish, and other such beliefs; and have accepted, for things worshipful, absolutely nothing but pairs of ourselves; taking for exclusive idols, gods, or objects of veneration, the infinitesimal points of humanity, Mr. and Mrs. P., and the Misses and Master P.'s;—out, I say, of this highly punctuated religion, which comes to its full stop and note of admiration after the family name, we shall get nothing,—*can* get nothing, but such issues as we see here. The whole temper of former art was in some way reverential—had awe in it: no matter how carefully or conventionally the workman ruled and

wrought the psalter page, he had every now and then a far away feeling that it was to be prayed out of—somebody would pray out of it some day—not entirely mechanically, nor by slip of bead. No matter how many madonnas he painted to order from the same outlines; the sense that the worst of them was sure, late or soon, to be looked up to through tears, could not but thrill through him as he arched the brow and animated the smile: nay, if he was but a poor armourer or enameller, the feeling that those chased traceries of cuish and helmet would be one day embossed in hot purple, deeper, perhaps, through fault of his, would every now and then make his hammer smite with sterner truer tone: awe and pity ruling over all his doings, such as now are unattainable. For Mr. and Mrs. P. are not in that sense awful—not in that sense pitiable: both—in another and deeper sense, but not in this.

Then the second source of the evil is the endeavour to assume the sentiment which we cannot possibly have. Let us accept our position; and good scientific, or diagrammatic, or politely personal or domestic art is still possible to us;—still may be made, if not majestic work, yet real work. There is use in a good geological diagram; and there is good riding in Rotten-row, to be seen any day between four and six; but if we profess to paint ghosts, when we believe in no immortality;—or Iphigenias and daughters of Jephthah, when we believe in no Deity—this is what we come to: not but that even ghosts are indeed still to be seen, and Iphigenias found (though perhaps sacrificed not altogether to Diana) by sharp-sighted persons—upon occasion.

It may be thought, I speak too seriously—or speak seriously in the wrong place—of this matter. I do not. The pictures are ludicrous enough. That which they signify is not ludicrous. And, as if to make us think out their signification fully, the Tennyson picture has a companion—an opposite at least—another illustration of English poetry by English art. The gate of Eden, with a Peri at it—an interesting scene to people who believe in Eden. We suppose ourselves to be rather nearer that gate—do not we?—than any of the old shepherds who saw ladders set to it in their dreams. And this is the aspect assumed by the gate, and the aspect of the angels in—or outside of it—upon such closer acquaintance. A "strait gate" truly.

This being so, I cannot enter with any pleasure into examination of the works of the two Water Colour Societies this year. For in their very nature those two societies appeal to the insensitiveness and pretence of the public: insensitiveness, because no refined eye could bear with the glaring colours, and blotted or dashed forms, which are the staple of modern water-colour work; and pretence, because this system of painting is principally supported by the idle amateurs who concern themselves about art without being truly interested in it; and by pupils of the various water-colour masters; who enjoy being taught to sketch brilliantly in six lessons.

In spite of all the apparent exertion, and reflex of Pre-Raphaelite minuteness from the schools above them, the Water Colour Societies are in steady descent. They were founded at first on a true and simple school of broad light and shade,—grey touched with golden colour on the lights. This, with clear and delicate washes for its transparent tones, was the method of all the earlier men; and the sincere love of nature which existed in the hearts of the first water-colour masters—Girtin, Cousens, Robson, Copley Fielding, Cox, Prout, and De Wint—formed a true and progressive school, till Hunt, the greatest of all, perfected his art. Hunt and Cox alone are left of all that group, and their works in the Old Water Colour are the only ones which are now seriously worth looking at; for in the endeavour to employ new resources, to rival oil colour, and to display facility, mere method has superseded all feeling and all wholesome aim, and has itself become finally degraded. The sponge and handkerchief have destroyed water-colour painting; and I believe there are now only two courses open to its younger students—either to "hark back" at once to the old grey schools, and ground themselves again firmly on chiaroscuro studies with the flat grey wash, or to take William Hunt for their only master, and resolve that they will be able to paint a piece of leafage and fruit approximately well in his way before they try even the smallest piece of landscape. If they want to follow Turner, the first course is the only one. Steady grey and yellow for ten years, and lead pencil point all your life, or no "Turnerism." No "dodge" will ever enable you otherwise to get round that corner. Those are the terms of the thing;

we may accept or not as we choose, but there are no others. I name, however, a few of the works in the rooms of the two societies, which are at least indicative of power to do well, if the painters choose.

In the New Water Colour, Mr. Warren's "Lost in the Woods" (88), and "Avenue" (228), are good instances of deceptive painting—scene-painting on a small scale—the treatment of the light through the leaf interstices being skilfully correspondent with photographic effects. There is no refined work or feeling in them, but they are careful and ingenious; and their webs of leafage are pleasant fly-traps to draw public attention, which, perhaps, after receiving, Mr. Warren may be able to justify by work better worthy of it.

In Mr. Cooke's "Hartland Point" (50), the sense of the low trickling of the rivulets of tide through infinite stones is very delightful; alternate rippling and resting of the confined, shallow, wandering water, that hardly will be at the trouble of getting down through the shingle, when it has to come up again over it soon. There are beautiful passages of atmosphere in this, as in all Mr. Cooke's drawings this year. The companion studies of morning and evening, on the same cliff (2 and 6), suggest a pretty idea, but not quite successfully. The contrast is not carried far enough in minor details.

Mr. Telbin's "Dovedale" (208) is very delightful: on the whole it seems to me the sweetest and rightest thing in the room, but scattered in subject. A pretty place, certainly, but incoherent; neither dark, nor light;—quiet, nor disquieted;—tame, nor wild, but tenderly chaotic and insipid—suggestive, to me at least, of nothing but going on to see if nothing better is to be found. The sensation, perhaps, is increased by the oval shape—not a wise one for a landscape; where one wants to know accurately the difference between slope and vertical, as bearing much on the sublimities of some things, and the moral characters of others.

Lastly, Mr. Rowbotham's "East Cliff" (268) is an earnest and admirable study; strong in discipline, and full of fact, but hard. Neither the sweetest colours not the subtlest forms have been seen—in fact, the heart of the cliff is not opened yet; but its muscular development is right. Yet it is costly drawing this, in attention, considering what water-colour work is usually; and the timbers and other *materie*

are well set in serviceable places. The painter must have felt himself braced after such work, and forwarded, in many ways.

In the rooms of the Old Water Colour Society, the first thing to be looked at should be Mr. Hunt's marvellous fruit piece, No. 261. It seems to me almost the exquisitest I have ever seen, in the glowing grey of the bosses of the pine, and sweeping curves of its leaves. After that, David Cox's magnificent waterfall, at the upper end of the room—unsurpassable in its own broad way, and giving, in the foam, examples of execution as broad as Salvator's, and infinitely more subtle and lovely. Then, everything else of David Cox's in the room, especially 274. Next, Mr. Newton's "Snow Scene," 181, which is very good; but the good of it might be got in a daguerreotype as well, and Mr. Newton can do better than a daguerreotype if he likes. We may well, however, look for his drawings round the room; all have something in them. The Inverness-shire moonlight (213) is especially good. And then follow round Mr. Naftel (who has made swift advance this year), in the same way, beginning with the beautiful bit of retiring mountain and glittering fern, No. 183; and staying long at No. 44, a notable study of smooth-sculptured torrent bed and flushed hill side; look also at the rolling clouds in Mr. Turner's "Ben Cruachan" (48), which are the truest clouds in the whole room. Then, give as much time as you can to Mr. Jackson's "Bamborough" (170), and to Mr. Smith's "Chillon" (91); both of them quiet and sincere. Chillon, the least bit too red, but the purple towers in shade very good; and the gradations of light in the distance admirable. And it must not be through any importunity of mine if you stay longer; for the rest of the works here are, indeed, some very pretty, and some entertaining, and many very clever; but hardly, so far as I see, calculated either to form our taste or advance our knowledge.

FRENCH EXHIBITION

6. Cherry-seller of Port l'Abbé, Brittany.

Very powerful and systematic in handling; right in form and gesture, and, up to its attempted point, in colour—only

the beauty of girls and cherries missed. French girls, the sweetest tempered living creatures in the world, are not obliged to Monsieur Antigua for his representation of their countenances to the English, as they appear either here or in No. 5 opposite (also a clever work), while "the pet squirrel" (4), though full of power, is entirely ignoble in its conception of girlhood. Respecting No. 1, it seems to me, we English might ask—"Is it so rare a thing in France to hold your umbrella over somebody else in a shower as to induce the person so generously protected always to kiss the hem of your robe?" I carried a bag of nuts, as big as an ordinary coal-sack, a mile up hill, from hedge to home, for a tired Lucernoise old woman the other day, getting in return kind thanks indeed, but no pictorial effects of this kind.

57. The Toilet. (*Edward Frère.*)

This, with 59 and 60, is worthy of the painter, which is saying much; but there is no advance on previous effort. The "Student," exhibited in 57, contained higher qualities of painting than any shown in the pictures of this year; and, which is a matter of much sorrow to me, I think the faces are on the whole less lovely than they were; quite as right and deep in expression, but some of their pure beauty lost: this is especially so in the face of the taller girl in 61.

I hear some complaints among the art-talk of the year, respecting the "monotony" of Frère's pictures. But rustic life is not, it should be remembered, on the whole an exciting matter. The superiors of the poor rustics occasionally procure them some excitement—in the way of roof-burning, or starvation; or bayonet, instead of spade agriculture,—with supply of richer manure to their fields than usual. But as Frère has seen it (and he paints only what he has seen), this cottage life, with its morning and evening prayer, and midday pottage, is a quiet business. You will not, I believe, get any disquietude from him. There is plenty brewing for us—subjects for historical painting or dramatic interest enough, on the horizon. For the present we will give our sympathy to the "Cut Finger," and to the tender little Florence, who binds it up, and be content.

91*a*. Bavarian Policemen, &c. (*Louis Knaus.*)

A most powerful work, full of entirely right expression alike in feature and gesture. The distant figures at the opening of the wood are among the most wonderful piece

of complete drawing in a faint tone which I have ever seen; and there is handling in the faces throughout, which, though much inferior to Hogarth in colour, and in deep conception of feeling, approaches him in expressive skill (perhaps there is more resemblance to him in the companion picture, 91*c*, than in this). The painting is everywhere vigorous, but fails, as I have said, in colour, especially in the flesh. Gypsies have indeed dark skins, but they have bright life beneath them; here we have only gypsy mahogany, not gypsy blood. The dog and monkey, however, are perfect—I think, in unexaggerated truth of action and expression, better than Landseer's work. A most notable picture it seems to me, though not a profound one; but its superficial qualities are of the rarest kind. The other, 91*b*, is rather deeper—at least in the dignity of the offended and hopeless wife—but it is coarse in colour.

147. A Country Fair in France. (*C. Troyon.*)

There is much cleverness in this picture, but it is painted on a totally false principle, which is doing so much mischief to the whole French school that I trust I may be pardoned for pointing it out very distinctly.

Chiaroscuro is a very noble subject of study; but it is not so noble a study as human nature: nor is it the subject which should mainly occupy our thoughts when we have human nature before us. Generally, we ought to see more in man or woman than that their foreheads come dark against the sky, or their petticoats and pantaloons white against it. If we see nothing but this, and think of nothing else in the company of our fellow creatures but the depth of their shadows, we are assuredly in such insensitive state of mind as must render all true painting impossible to us. It may be the most important thing about a pollard willow that it comes greyly against a cloud, or gloomily out of a pool. But respecting a man, his greyness or opacity are not the principal facts which it is desirable to state of him. If you cannot see his human beauty, and have no sympathy with his mind, don't paint him. Go and paint logs, or stones, or weeds;—you will not, indeed, paint even these at all supremely, for *their* best beauty is also in a sort human: nevertheless you will not insult them, as you do living creatures, by perceiving in them only opacity. Immense harm has been done in this matter by the popular misunderstanding

of Rembrandt—for Rembrandt's strength is in rendering of human character—not in chiaroscuro. Rembrandt's chiaroscuro is always forced—generally false, and wholly vulgar: it is in all possible ways inferior, *as* chiaroscuro, to Correggio's, Titian's, Tintoret's, Veronese's, or Velasquez's. But in rendering human character, such as he saw about him, Rembrandt is nearly equal to any of these men, and the real power of him is in his stern and steady touch on lip and brow—seen best in his lightest etchings—or in the lightest parts of the handling of his portraits, the head of the Jew in our own gallery being about as good and thorough work as it is possible to see of his. And when this is so, and the great qualities of character and of form are first secured—after them, and in due subordination to them—chiaroscuro and everything else will come rightly and gloriously; and they always do come in such order; no chiaroscuro ever was good, as such, which was not subordinate to character and to form; and all search after it as a first object ends in the loss of the thing itself so sought. One of our English painters, Constable, professed this pursuit in its simplicity. "Though my pictures should have nothing else, they shall have chiaroscuro." The sacrifice was accepted by the Fates, but the prayer denied. His pictures *had* nothing else; but they had *not* chiaroscuro.

SOCIETY OF BRITISH ARTISTS

I SEE no distinctive reason for noting any of the works in the room at Suffolk-street (though many of them meritorious in their usual way,) except only Mr. Baxter's "Red Riding Hood" (158), and Mr. Roberts's "Child at Play" (48), and "Opinion of the Press" (173). Of these, the first showed, I thought, a great gift of painting, and great feeling for beauty, if the painter will not try to imitate the superficial qualities of Reynolds more than the sterling ones. The two works by Mr. W. Roberts are interesting; not indeed for absolute perfection of attainment, but for their fidelity of light and shade; many pictures are more brilliant; but it is rare to find any so equally studied and harmoniously balanced in all parts; no bits of colour painted at inconsistent times, or in a changed temper, and therefore discordant. Few people

would believe, for instance, that the strong orange touch on the girl's shoulder, in No. 48, was indeed the faithful representation of sunlight reflected at that angle from a purple dress; but so it is, and all the other pieces of effect are as earnestly watched and rendered,[1] and the figure of the little girl very gracefully designed.

It may not be out of place, in noticing the sentiment of No. 173, which is well and graphically expressed, to warn young painters against attaching too much importance to press criticism as an influence on their fortunes. If sharp and telling, it is a disagreeable thing to look at, when just damp from the type; and it is certainly in an unpleasantly convenient form for one's friends to carry about in their pockets. But, ultimately, it is quite powerless, except so far as it concurs with general public opinion. I have never yet seen even a bad picture crushed by criticism, much less a good one. The sale of a given work may, indeed, be checked, or prevented; but so it may by a whisper, or a chance touch of the elbow. I have seen more real mischief and definite injury to property done in ten minutes by an idle coxcomb amusing his party, than could possibly be done by all the malice in type than could be got into the journals of a season. The printed malice only makes people look at the picture; the fool's jest makes them pass it. And though public taste is capricious enough—and erroneous enough—so as to make it very difficult to say how it is to be strongly wrought upon, yet let all young painters be assured of this—that *an absolutely good painting is always sure of sale.* If they choose to offend the public by wanton eccentricity, or easily avoidable error, they have only themselves to blame when the public loses its temper and passes their real merits without notice. The charity of artists is in condescending to please; and they deservedly suffer when they have it not. A great and good musician lowers his voice when he sings in a sick room, and raises it when he has to fill the theatre; he will sing lightly for the child, and simply for the uninstructed, but nobly and gloriously for all. So also a great painter can show his majesty in nothing more than by securing, in timely gentleness, empire over all hearts. It is only his petulance or his pride —not his power—which will alienate the eyes of men: if

[1] Except the extreme distance, which is sunless.

Veronese rose now among us, or Correggio, there would be at first a wandering, attentive silence—not a murmur heard against them : and presently they would make the very streets ring for joy, and every lip laugh with acclamation ; not because their essential power could be perceived by all—or by one in a thousand of all—but because, up to the point of possible perception, it would be made loveable by all.

I repeat, therefore, to the young painter, in all distinctness and completeness, this assurance : Do your work well, and kindly, and no enemy can harm you. So soon as your picture deserves to be bought, it will be bought. If, indeed, you want to live by your art before you have learned it ; or to sell what you know to be worthless, by catching the fancy of the purchaser ; or to display your own dexterity, instead of truth of facts ; or to preach to people, instead of pleasing them : in each and all these cases you must take the chances of your speculation, or the penalty of your presumption. There are, indeed, some things you may preach without presumption ; only, do not expect to be paid for your sermons : for people will pay richly for being pleased—scarcely, if at all, for being rebuked.

NOTES ON

THE TURNER GALLERY

AT

MARLBOROUGH HOUSE

1856–7

NOTES ON THE TURNER GALLERY

THE works of Turner are broadly referable to four periods, during each of which the painter wrought with a different aim, or with different powers.

In the first period, 1800–1820, he laboured as a student, imitating successively the works of the various masters who excelled in the qualities he desired to attain himself.

In his second period, 1820–1835, he worked on the principles which during his studentship he had discovered; imitating no one, but frequently endeavouring to do what the then accepted theories of art required of all artists—namely, to produce beautiful compositions or ideals, instead of transcripts of natural fact.

In his third period, 1835–1845, his own strong instincts conquered the theories of art altogether. He thought little of "ideals," but reproduced, as far as he could, the simple impressions he received from Nature, associating them with his own deepest feelings.

In 1845 his health gave way, and his mind and sight partially failed. The pictures painted in the last five years of his life are of wholly inferior value. He died in 1851.

These, then, being the broad divisions of his career, we will take the pictures belonging to each in their order; first dwelling a little on the general characteristics of each epoch.

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FIRST PERIOD, OR THAT OF STUDENTSHIP

Generally, the pictures belonging to this time are notable for their grey or brown colour, and firm, sometimes heavy, laying on of the paint. And this for two reasons. Every great artist, without exception, needs, and feels that he needs, to learn to express the *forms* of things before he can express the *colours* of things; and it much facilitates this

expression of form if the learner will use at first few and simple colours. And the paint is laid on firmly, partly in mere unskilfulness (it being much easier to lay a heavy touch than a light one), but partly also in the struggle of the learner against indecision, just as the notes are struck heavily in early practice (if useful and progressive) on a pianoforte. But besides these reasons, the kind of landscapes which were set before Turner as his models, and which, during nearly the whole of this epoch, he was striving to imitate, were commonly sober in colour, and heavy in touch. Brown was thought the proper colour for trees, grey for shadows, and fog-yellow for high lights. "Child Roland to the dark tower came," and had to clear his way through all the fog; twenty years of his life passed before he could fairly get leave to see. It follows that the evidences of invention, or of new perception, must be rarer in the pictures of this period than in subsequent ones. It was not so much to think brilliantly, as to draw accurately, that Turner was trying; not so much to invent new things, as to rival the old. His own perceptions are traceable only by fits and fragments through the more or less successful imitation.

It is to be observed, however, that his originality is enough proved by the fact that these pictures of his studentship, though they nearly all are imitations, are none of them *copies*. Nearly every other great master in his youth copied some of the works of other masters; but Turner, when he wanted to understand a master's merits, instead of copying, painted an original picture in the required style. Instead of copying a Vandevelde, he went to the sea, and painted *that*, in Vandevelde's way. Instead of copying a Poussin, he went to the mountains, and painted *them*, in Poussin's way. And from the lips of the mountains and the sea themselves, he learned one or two things which neither Vandevelde nor Poussin could have told him; until at last, continually finding these sayings of the hills and waves on the whole the soundest kind of sayings, he came to listen to no others.

II. Pictures of the First Period

454. Moonlight. A study at Millbank[1] (1797).

It will be seen by reference to the classification of Turner's work, just given, that I do not consider the painter to have been in existence before the year 1800. That is to say, there is nothing in his drawings before that year, which gives definite promise of any extraordinary excellence: precision of line, watchful sympathy with casual incident, and a delicate, though feeble rendering of some effects of atmospheric gradation, are all that can be usually traced in them: his contemporary oil paintings are much rarer, and I cannot give any account of their general character. This example is an imitation of the Dutch moonlights, but closely studied from the real moon, and very true in expression of its glow towards the horizon: for the rest, its heavy and leaden sky, feeble execution, and total absence of apparent choice or arrangement in the form of boats and buildings, as they make it singular in demerit, so they make it precious as an example of the unpresumptuous labour of a great man in his youth. And the Trustees have judged well in showing it among these mighty pictures: for the sorrowful moonlight on the Thames and its gloomy city, as it was his youth's study, was one of the last sights which sank before his dying eyes.

466. View in Wales (about 1800).

This picture is rightly described in the Catalogue[2] as "a direct imitation of Wilson;" but Wilson is treated with injustice in the next sentence: "it might be mistaken for a work of that master." It does not yet, in any single point, approximate to Wilson's power—nor, even in his strongest time, did Turner (in oil) give serenely warm tones of atmosphere with Wilson's skill. This work is a sufficiently poor

[1] Exhibited in the large room of the old Royal Academy in 1797. At this time, Turner was studying architecture chiefly. The titles of the other subjects exhibited that year were:—

279. Fishermen coming ashore at sunset, previous to a gale.
427. Transept of Ewenny Priory, Glamorganshire.
450. Choir of Salisbury Cathedral.
464. Ely Cathedral. South Transept.
517. North porch of Salisbury Cathedral.

[2] Turner Gallery, with Catalogue of the Vernon collection (Clarke and Co.), sold by permission of the Trustees.

imitation of Wilson's commonest qualities; and it is interesting to see what those common qualities are. This professes to be a view in Wales; but, because it is to be idealised, and like Wilson, it has not a single Welsh character. The ground is not rocky—but composed, in the classical manner, of lumps of clay; the river is not a mountain stream, but a classical stream, or what is called by head gardeners a "piece of water"; the hills are neither moorland, nor crag, nor pasture-land, but the Italian tufted pattern; and the building on the top of them is turned from a plain Welsh church into that remarkable tower with no bells in it, nor door, nor window, which served all the old landscapists from generation to generation;—Claude and Domenichino—Cuyp, and Wouvermans, and Berghem—Tempesta and Vernet—using it one after another, like a child's coral, to cut their teeth upon. The white figures are set, we observe, in an orthodox manner, to relieve the principal dark, by precept and example of Sir Geo. Beaumont, Sir F. Bourgeois, &c. A few somewhat careless scratches in the foreground, to the right, reveal, at last, a little beneficent impatience—for which Heaven be praised. For there is an impatience of genius as well as a patience—and woe worth the man who could have painted such a picture as this without being tired of it!

468. View on Clapham Common (1802?).

The manner of this painting, though still leaning to Wilson's, is much complicated with that of Morland, whom Turner was studying about this time, very admiringly. The somewhat affected rolling and loading of the colour in the sky is founded altogether on Morland. Nevertheless, this picture is really a study from Nature; possessing therefore some noble qualities of tree form. It is evidently left unfinished in the foreground.

471. Jason (1802).

I have not seen this picture for several years, and cannot, in its present position, see it at all; but I remember it as very characteristic of Turner's increasing power in his first period, and showing high imaginative faculties. In very sunny days a keen-eyed spectator may discern, even where the picture hangs now, something in the middle of it like the arch of an ill-built drain. This is a coil of the dragon beginning to unroll himself. The passage in the

note [1] from the second volume of "Modern Painters" refers to the reminiscence of this picture in the Liber Studiorum; but it applies also, though not so strongly, to the picture itself, and will perhaps help the reader to enter better into Turner's meaning. It should, however, be added, that this showing only a part of the dragon's body, and thereby increasing our awe, is one of the instances in which Turner's mysticism first developed itself; just as the entire conception is the first notable evidence of the love of horror which formed one of the most important elements in his mind. Of which, more presently.

472. Calais Pier [2] (1803).

[1] "In Retsch's illustrations to Schiller's Kampf mit dem Drachen, we have an instance, feeble indeed, but characteristic, and suited to our present purpose, of the detailing and finishing action of the fancy. The dragon is drawn from head to tail, vulture eyes, serpent teeth, forked tongue, fiery crest, armour, claws, and coils as grisly as may be; his den is drawn, and all the dead bones in it, and all the savage forest-country about it far and wide; we have him from the beginning of his career to the end, devouring, rampant, victorious over whole armies, gorged with death; we are present at all the preparations for his attack, see him receive his death-wound, and our anxieties are finally becalmed by seeing him lie peaceably dead on his back.

"All the time we have never got into the dragon's heart, we have never once had real sense of the creature's being; it is throughout nothing but an ugly composition of claw and scale. Now take up Turner's Jason, (Liber Studiorum,) and observe how the imagination can concentrate all this, and infinitely more, into one moment. No far forest-country, no secret paths, nor cloven hills; nothing but a gleam of pale horizontal sky, that broods over pleasant places far away, and sends, through the wild overgrowth of the thicket, a ray of broken daylight into the hopeless pit. No flaunting plumes nor brandished lances, but stern purpose in the turn of the crestless helmet, visible victory in the drawing back of the prepared right arm behind the steady point. No more claws, nor teeth, nor manes, nor stinging tails. We have the dragon, like everything else, *by the middle*. We need see no more of him. All his horror is in that fearful, slow, griding, upheaval of the single coil. Spark after spark of it, ring after ring is sliding into the light, the slow glitter steals along him step by step, broader and broader, a lighting of the funeral lamps one by one, quicker and quicker; a moment more, and he is out upon us, all crash and blaze, among those broken trunks;—but he will be nothing then to what he is now." Vol. II., p. 320.

[2] Turner's title of this picture in the Academy Catalogue of 1803, was "Calais Pier, with French Poissardes preparing for sea, an English packet arriving." An elaborate engraving was undertaken from it by Mr. Lupton, and was carried forward with infinite patience nearly to completion, when Turner got tired of his own composition; doubled

This picture is the first which bears the sign manual and sign mental of Turner's colossal power. The "Jason" might have been painted by a man who would not, in the rest of his career, have gone beyond Salvator. But here we have the richest, wildest, and most difficult composition—exquisite appreciation of form and effect in sea and sky—and the first indication of colour, properly so called, in the fish.[1] This makes the picture of immense importance in the history of Turner's progress; for the rest of it is still painted nearly on the old Wilsonian principles: that is to say, the darks are all exaggerated to bring out the lights; (the post for instance, in the foreground, is nearly coal black, relieved only with brown)—all the shadows are coal black,—and the greys of the sky sink almost into night effect. And observe, this is not with any intention of giving an impressive effect of violent storm. It is very squally and windy; but the fishing boats are going to sea, and the packet is coming in in her usual way, and the flat fish are a topic of principal interest on the pier. Nobody is frightened, and there is no danger. The sky is black only because Turner did not yet generally know how to bring out light otherwise than by contrast. But in those aforesaid flat fish, light is coming in another way: by colour and gradation. Note the careful loading and crumbling of the paint to the focus of light in the nearer one; and the pearly playing colour in the others.

It may be well to advise the reader that the "English packet" is the cutter in the centre, entering the harbour; else he might perhaps waste some time in trying to discover the "Princess Maude" or "Princess Alice" through the gloom on the left. The figures throughout will repay examination; none are without individuality and interest. It

the height of the sails, pushed some of the boats further apart, and some nearer together; introduced half a dozen more; and at last brought the whole thing into irreparable confusion—in which it was left. Any person happening to possess a proof of this plate in its later states, will be much edified by comparing it with the picture.

[1] The reader will find an important anecdote, touching upon these fish, in my pamphlet on Pre-Raphaelitism, p. 36. I owe it to Mr. Lupton: but have made a mistake respecting the time during which Turner had lost sight of his own picture before the circumstance took place. I should have written "several years" instead of "several months."

will be observed, perhaps, that the fisherman at the stern of the boat just pushing from the pier, seems unreasonably excited in bidding adieu to his wife, who looks down to him over the parapet; but if the spectator closely examines the dark bottle which he shakes at her, he will find she has given it him only half full of Cognac. She has kept the rest in her own flask.

The sky is throughout very noble, as well as the indication of space of horizon beyond the bowsprit of the vessel outside the harbour. In a dark day the finer passages on this side of the picture are, however, quite invisible.

476. Shipwreck (1805).

I cannot find any record of the exhibition of this picture, and take its date, therefore, on the authority of the published catalogue. There appears, however, to be about as much as two years would give of difference in style between this and the "Calais Pier;" the principal changes being in the more delicate and mysterious grey, instead of the ponderous blackness; and the evidently more stern and pathetic temper of the maturing mind.

Although there is much to be regretted in the present position of this picture—as of all the rest—there is, in this one instance, an advantage in its nearness to a characteristic work of Turner's late period, so that we may learn much from a comparison of the two. Stand a little towards the centre of the room, where you can look alternately from the "Shipwreck" to the "Phryne" (521), and consider the general character of each subject. In the first, there is the utmost anxiety and distress, of which human life is capable: in the second, the utmost recklessness and rapture. In the first, a multitude's madness in despair: in the second, a multitude's madness in delight. In the first, the Nature is an infinity of cloud and condemnation: in the second, an infinity of light and beneficence. In the first, the work of man is in its lowest humiliation—the wreck disappearing from the sea like a passing shadow: in the second, the work of man is in its utmost pride; in endlessness of accumulation, and perfectness of persistence; temple beyond temple, pillar above pillar, tower crowning tower; a universe of triumphal Peace. Time, in the first, has death and life in its every moment: in the second, it exists only to be laughed away. Here, the ocean waves are playing with

a ship of war: there, two dogs are playing with a crystal ball. And, in the one picture, the pleasant boughs wave, and the sun lightens, and the buildings open their glorious gates upon the track of guilt: and, in the other, the sea asks for, and the heavens allow, the doom of those in whom we know no evil.

Do not think that I am forcing the meaning of these two pictures. They were not indeed painted with any thought of their comparison or opposition; but they indicate two opposite phases of the painter's mind, and his better and pitying grasp of this world's ways. The "Shipwreck" is one only of many, in which he strove to speak his sympathy with the mystery of human pain. The other is definitely painted as an expression of the triumph of Guilt. Do not think those two dogs playing with the crystal ball are meaningless. Dogs don't usually play with crystal balls. Turner intended you to notice them specially. They mean the lower or sensual part of human nature, playing with the World. Look how the nearest one, the graceful greyhound, leaps at it!—watch its wild toss and fairy fragility of colour: then look out on that illimitable space of courts and palaces, into which the troop of flying girls are rushing down! That is the world which Phryne plays with. Turner never painted such another distance for infinity or for completeness: observe, none of these palaces are in ruins; Turner liked ruins for his own part, but Phryne did not. She would have built Thebes again if they would have let her; she was not one to go the way of ruins. And if you still doubt his meaning, look to the Academy Catalogue of 1838, and you will find a sentence added to the account of the picture. "Phryne going to the bath as Venus. *Demosthenes taunted by Æschines;*"—Note that;—the man who could have saved Greece taunted by the son of the harlot!

There is something very strange and sorrowful in the way Turner used to hint only at these under meanings of his; leaving us to find them out, helplessly; and if we did *not* find them out, no word more ever came from him. Down to the grave he went, silent. "You cannot read me." "You do not care for me; let it all pass; go your ways."

Touching the actual painting of the figures in this "Phryne," we shall have more to say presently, our business,

now, being with the "Shipwreck"; in which, however, note for future animadversion, that the crew of the nearer boat prove infinitely more power of figure-painting than ever landscape painter showed before. Look close into it: coarse it may be; but it comes very nearly up to Hogarth in power of expression. Look at that ghastly woman's face and those helpless arms; and the various torpor and terror, and desolate agony, crushed and drenched down among the rending planks and rattling oars. Think a little over your "landscapes with figures." Hunt up your solitary fishermen on river banks; your Canaletto and Guardi crowds in projecting dominoes and triangular hats; your Claudesque nymphs and warriors; your modern picturesque groups of striped petticoats and scarlet cloaks; and see whether you can find *one* piece of true human action and emotion drawn as that boat's crew is, before you allow yourself again to think that Turner could not paint figures. Whether he always *would* paint them or not is another question.

The sea painting, in both this and the "Calais Pier," is, I think, much over-rated. It is wonderful in rendering action of wave; but neither the lustre of surface nor nature of the foam—still less of the spray—are marked satisfactorily. Through his whole life, Turner's drawing of large waves left them deficient in lustre and liquidity; and this was the more singular, because in calm or merely rippled water, no one ever rendered lustre or clearness so carefully. But his sympathies (and he sympathised with everything) were given to the rage of the wave, not to its shining; and as he traced its toss and writhe, he neglected its glow. The want of true foam drawing is a worse fault; none of the white touches in these seas have, in the least, the construction or softness of foam; and there is no spray anywhere. In reality, in such a sea as this of the shipwreck, the figures even in the nearest boat would have been visible only in dim fragments through the mist of spray; and yeasty masses of spume would have been hanging about the breakers like folds of cloth, and fluttering and flashing on the wind like flights of birds. Turner was still close bound by the old theories of the sea; and, though he had looked at it long enough to know the run and the leap of it, dared not yet lay the foam on its lips. He did better afterwards.

In the year 1842 he exhibited a picture in the Academy, thus described in the catalogue :—

"Snowstorm. Steamboat off a harbour mouth making signals, and going by the lead. The author [1] was in this storm the night the 'Ariel' left Harwich."

This picture was described by some of the critics of the day as a mass of "soapsuds and whitewash." Turner was passing the evening at my father's house on the day this criticism came out : and after dinner, sitting in his arm-chair by the fire, I heard him murmuring low to himself at intervals, "Soapsuds and whitewash!" again, and again, and again. At last I went to him, asking "why he minded what they said?" Then he burst out ;—"Soapsuds and whitewash! What would they have? I wonder what they think the sea's like? I wish they'd been in it."

The picture belongs to the nation, and, when exhibited, will be interesting, as marking how far the sense of foaming mystery, and blinding whiteness of surf and salt, then influenced his conception of the sea, rather than the old theories of black clouds relieving terminated edges of waves. The sea is, however, even so, not quite right : it is not yeasty *enough :* the linear wave-action is still too much dwelt upon, and confused with the true foam.

But there is a worse fault in this shipwreck than the want of spray. Nobody is *wet.* Every figure in that boat is as dry as if they all were travelling by waggon through the inland counties. There is no sense, in the first place, of their clothes clinging to their bodies ; and, in the second place, no surface is reflective. When smooth things are wet, they shine ; wood becomes as reflective as a mirror ; and, therefore, when we see that the knee of the boy who lies down on the box to catch at some one over the boat's side, casts no reflection on the wood, the whole of the scene becomes purely mythical and visionary : and it is no longer a sea, but some coiling, white, dry material in which the boat is imbedded. Throughout the work, the firm, black shadows, unbroken by any flashes of lustre, and the dead greys, unmingled with any reflective or glancing colour, are equally inconsistent with the possibility of anything's being wet.

[1] Note Turner's significant use of this word, instead of "artist."

Nothing can show more distinctly the probationary state Turner's mind at the period; he had not yet been able quit himself of the old types in any one way—had not en got so far as to understand that the sea was a damp ement. I used once to think Homer's phrase, "wet ater," somewhat tautological; but I see that he was right, nd that it takes time to understand the fact.[1]

With all these drawbacks (which I dwell upon in order ore effectually to overthrow the idea of these being Tur-er's greatest works, and this his greatest style—a notion avely interfering with our power of judging any of his ork)—with all these drawbacks and shortcomings, the work far in advance of anything that had been done before. he reader may perhaps have some pleasure in comparing laude's idea of a shipwreck with Turner's. The woodcut page 359—a fac-simile of a shipwreck in the Liber Veri-tis [2]—will enable him to do so at his ease. As, however, e have been endeavouring to elucidate the meaning of urner verbally, perhaps it is unfair to Claude to leave him

[1] Writing lately to my friend Mr. Brierly, (with whose most faithful d brilliant drawings of our navy in the Baltic the public are already familiar,) in order to make some inquiries respecting the ships in the Calais Pier," I alluded to this singular defect in both the sea pieces. ie following extract from Mr. Brierly's note in reply is most valuable d suggestive :—

"Your remark about nobody being wet caused me to look again ore particularly at the "Shipwreck," when another idea also occurred me. In anything of a breeze, and particularly half a gale of wind, we have here, the lower parts of all sails of such boats as these get roughly wetted by the spray dashing into them, so that the upper ivas being dry, is several shades lighter, and greyer or cooler, than wet portion; always excepting when there has been heavy rain to t the sails equally. This will strike you in any ordinary breezy ather, when you see boats knocking about at Spithead, and if the is shining through the sails, the transparent wet parts give a very utiful effect."

Not only has Turner missed this effect in the "Calais Pier"—when weather is just the thing for it (I think we might fairly suppose in "Shipwreck" the sails to be wet all over)—but I remember no tance of Turner's seizing it in any subsequent picture—so much did old conventionalism weigh upon him.

owe to Mr. Brierly, however, not only the pointing out of this or, but of a principal beauty in the sea of the "Shipwreck"—the ct truth, namely, of the lines of the *wake* of the large boat running k to the left from her stern. Very few painters would have noticed se.

[2] No. 72.

wholly unexplained. The following references may assist the reader in making out the subject :—

s.—The ship.
m.m.—Masts of the ship, entirely denuded of rigging by the violence of the gale.
r.—The rock, on which the ship has struck so violently that she has broken one end entirely off, the rest of her remaining quite uninjured.
a.b.—The sea.
e.—An enraptured passenger, who has escaped from the ship.
c.—The captain, who has seen everything out of the ship, and is preparing to follow the enraptured passenger.
w.w.—The wind.

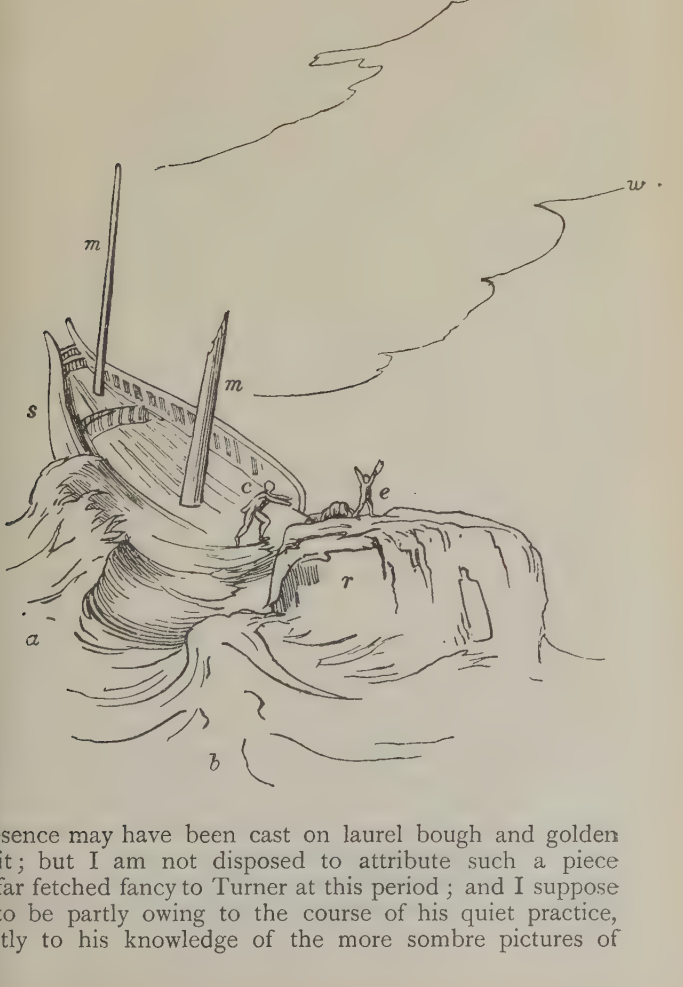
477. The Goddess of Discord in the Gardens of the Hesperides.[1] (1806.)

In the year 1802, Turner seems to have visited Switzerland for the first time ; up to that date, no Swiss subject appears in the catalogues as having been exhibited by him ; but in 1803, besides the Calais Pier, we find "24. Bonneville, Savoy, with Mont Blanc." 110. The Opening of the Festival of the Vintage at Maçon. 237. Chateau de St. Michael, Bonneville, Savoy. 384. St. Hugo denouncing vengeance on the Shepherds of Cormayeur, in the Val d'Aosta. And 396. Glacier and Source of the Arveron showing with what enthusiasm he entered on the new fields opened to him in the Alps.

This wonderful picture of the Hesperides is, however, the first *composition* in which Turner introduced the mountain knowledge he had gained in his Swiss journey : and it is a combination of these Swiss experiences, under the guidance of Nicolas Poussin, whose type of landscape has been followed throughout. Nearly all the faults of the picture are owing to Poussin ; and all its virtues to the Alps. I say *nearly* all the faults of the picture, because it would not be fair to charge Poussin wholly with its sombre colour, inasmuch

[1] Exhibited at the British Institution in 1806, under the title "The Goddess of Discord choosing the Apple of Contention in the Gardens," &c.

as many of his landscapes are beautifully golden and deep blue. Possibly the Goddess of Discord may have had something to do with the matter; and the shadow of her



presence may have been cast on laurel bough and golden fruit; but I am not disposed to attribute such a piece of far fetched fancy to Turner at this period; and I suppose it to be partly owing to the course of his quiet practice, partly to his knowledge of the more sombre pictures of

Poussin rather than of the splendid ones, and partly to the continued influence of Wilson and Morland—that the garden of the Hesperides is so particularly dull a place. But it is a sorrowful fault in the conception that it should be so.

Indeed, unless we were expressly assured of the fact, I question whether we should have found out that these were gardens at all, as they have the appearance rather of wild mountain ground, broken and rocky; with a pool of gloomy water; some heavy groups of trees, of the species grown on Clapham Common; and some bushes bearing very unripe and pale pippins—approaching in no wise the beauty of a Devonshire or Normandy orchard, much less that of an orange grove, and, least of all, of such fruit as goddesses would be likely to quarrel for.

But there are much worse errors in the picture than these. We may grant the grey colour to Turner's system; we may accept the wild ground as the only kind of garden which would be probable under Atlas; though the places which Discord seeks, and dragons guard, are usually of a nature at once brighter and baser. But we cannot accept the impossibilities of mountain form into which the wretched system of Poussin's idealism moulded Turner's memory of the Alps. It is not *possible* that hill masses on this scale, should be divided into these simple, steep, and stone-like forms. Great mountains, however bold, are always full of endless fracture and detail, and indicate on the brows and edges of their cliffs, both the multitudinous, and the deeply wearing continuance, of the force of time, and stream, and tempest. This evidence of subdivision and prolonged endurance is always more and more distinct as the scale increases; the simple curves which are true for a thousand feet are false at three thousand, and falser at ten thousand; and the forms here adopted by Turner are not mountain forms at all, but those of small fragments of limestone, with a few loose stones at the top of them, magnified by mist into mountains. All this was the result of Idealism. Nature's mountains were not grand, nor broad, nor bold, nor steep enough. Poussin only knew what they should be, and the Alps must be rough-hewn to his mind.

Farther, note the enormous torrent which roars down

behind the dragon, above the main group of trees. In nature, that torrent would have worn for itself a profound bed, full of roundings and wrinkled lateral gulphs. Here, it merely dashes among the squared stones as if it had just been turned on by a New River company. And it has not only had no effect on its bed, but appears quite unable to find its way to the bottom, for we see nothing more of it after it has got down behind the tree tops. In reality, the whole valley beneath would have been filled by a mass of rounded stones and debris by such a torrent as that.

But farther. When the streams are so lively in the distance, one might at least expect them not to be stagnant in the foreground, and if we may have no orderly gravel walks, nor gay beds of flowers in our garden, but only large stones and bushes, we might surely have had the pleasantness of a clear mountain stream. But Poussin never allowed mountain streams; nothing but dead water was proper in a classical foreground; so we have the brown pool with a water-lily or two, and a conventional fountain, falling, not into a rocky trough, or a grassy hollow, but into a large glass bowl or tureen. This anticipation of the beauties of the Soulages collection, given in charge to the dragon together with his apples, "Glass, with care," is certainly not Poussin's fault, but a caprice of Turner's own.

In the published catalogue the reader will find it stated that the "*colour* and texture of this picture are as rich and sound as the ideas are noble, and universally intelligible." The ideas *are* noble indeed; for the most part:—noble in spite of Poussin, and intelligible in spite of Marlborough House darkness; but the statement that the colour is rich only shows what curious ideas people in general have about colour. I do not call it a work in colour at all. It is a simple study in grey and brown, heightened with a red drapery, and cooled with a blue opening in the sky. But colour, properly so called, there is as yet none; nothing but the usual brown trees near, grey trees far off, brown stonework, and black shadow. And it is another notable proof of the terrible power of precedent on the strongest human mind, that just as Vandevelde kept Turner for twenty years from seeing that the sea was wet, so Poussin

kept Turner for twenty years from seeing that the Alps were rosy, and that grass was green. It would be a wonderful lesson for us all if we could for a moment set a true piece of Swiss foreground and mountain beside that brown shore and those barren crags. The moss arabesques of violet and silver; the delicate springing of the myrtille leaves along the clefts of shade, and blue bloom of their half seen fruit; the rosy flashes of rhododendron-flame from among the pine roots, and their crests of crimson, sharp against the deep Alpine air, from the ridges of grey rock; the gentian's peace of pale, ineffable azure; as if strange stars had been made for earth out of the blue light of heaven; the soft spaces of mountain grass, for ever young, over which the morning dew is dashed so deep that it looks, under the first long sun-rays, like a white veil falling folded upon the hills; wreathing itself soon away into silvery tresses of cloud, braided in and out among the pines, and leaving all the fair glades and hillocks warm with the pale green glow of grassy life, and whispering with lapse of everlasting springs. Infinite tenderness mingled with this infinite power, and the far away summits, alternate pearl and purple, ruling it from their stainless rest. A time came when the human heart, whose openings we are watching, could feel these things, but we must not talk too much of its achievements yet.

There is, however, one image in the landscape which, in its kind, is as noble as may be—the dragon that guards and darkens it; a goodly watch-tower he has; and a goodly pharos he will make of it at midnight, when the fire glares hottest from the eyes of the ghastly sentinel. There is something very wonderful, it seems to me, in this anticipation, by Turner, of the grandest reaches of recent inquiry into the form of the dragons of the old earth. I do not know at what period the first hints were given of the existence of their remains; but certainly no definite statements of their probable forms were given either by Buckland, Owen, or Conybeare before 1815; yet this saurian of Turner's is very nearly an exact counterpart of the model of the Iguanodon, now the guardian of the Hesperian Gardens of the Crystal Palace, wings only excepted, which are, here, almost accurately, those of a pterodactyle. The instinctive grasp which the healthy imagination takes of *possible* truth,

even in its wildest flights, was never more marvellously demonstrated.[1]

I am very anxious to get this picture hung lower, in order that the expression of the dragon's head may be well seen, and all the mighty articulations of his body, rolling in great iron waves, a cataract of coiling strength and crashing armour, down among the mountain rents. Fancy him moving, and the roaring of the ground under his rings; the grinding down of the rocks by his toothed whorls; the skeleton glacier of him in thunderous march, and the ashes of the hills rising round him like smoke, and encompassing him like a curtain!

I have already alluded to the love of the terrible grotesque which mingled in no small measure with the love of the beautiful in Turner's mind, as it did in Tintoret's. The reader will find farther inquiries into this subject in the eighth chapter of the third volume of "Modern Painters," and I need only notice here the peculiar *naturalness* which there is in Turner's grotesque, and the thirst for largeness which characterizes his conception of animals as well as landscapes. No serpent or dragon was ever conceived before, either so vast, or so *probable*, as these of the Jason and Hesperides. Another picture, also in the possession of the nation, "Rizpah, the Daughter of Aiah," will show the same grasp of terror exerted in another direction, and connecting the English landscape painter, bred as he was in the cold and severe classical school, with the German interpreters of fantastic or pathetic superstition.

483. Greenwich Hospital (1809).

I never know whether most to venerate or lament the strange impartiality of Turner's mind, and the vast cadence of subjects in which he was able to take interest. Who could have supposed, that a man capable of climbing those crags of Atlas, would be found next year sauntering in Greenwich Park: that from the fiery dragon he would have turned to peaceful fawns and hinds—from the rolling of the Atlantean storm-cloud, to the smoke of London chimneys—from the apples of the Hesperides, to the Cider Cellar. So it is, however. He does not show one whit less care, patience, or exertion of power in painting this reach of the

[1] Compare "Modern Painters," vol. iii., chap. viii., §§ 12, &c.

river round the Isle of Dogs, than that cataract down the cliff of dragons: nay, in some respects, the Deptford distance is more elaborate, and certainly the more skilful, for Turner at this time understood it better. But what a sorrowful matter it is, that the man who could paint thus was allowed to divide his strength between vulgarity of fact and gracefulness of fiction; that he was permitted so long to think that in order to be fine, it was necessary to be false; and that no one had sense or feeling enough to say to him, "Paint me the Rhone as truly as you have painted the Thames—and the Simplon as you have painted Richmond Hill—and Rouen Cathedral as you have painted Greenwich Hospital"! He found his way at last to these things: but not till many and many a year had been wasted on Greenwich and Bligh Sands.

It is of no use to write any notes on this picture where it is hung at present. I value Turners as much as most people, and am far-sighted; but I literally would not give five pounds for that picture of Greenwich, if to its possession were annexed the condition that it was to be hung six feet above the eye—much less if it were condemned to such a position as it is in at present.

485. Abingdon, Berkshire (1810?).

A very beautiful example of the painter's most skilful work in his first period: the main lesson to be derived from it being the dignity of the simplest objects, when truly painted, under partial concealment by aerial effects. They must be truly painted, observe, first; the forms given must be studied with exquisite care, but veiled as far as is needful to give them largeness and mystery.

To so singular an extent will the forms of things come out gradually *through* the mist, as you look long at Turner's effects of this kind, that many of his admirers have thought that he painted the whole scene first with all its details, and then threw the mist over it. But it is not so; and it cannot be done so: all efforts to copy Turner on such a plan will end in total discomfiture. The misty effect is indeed partly given by breaking one colour over another; but the forms of objects are not thus rendered indistinct; if they were, the picture would look as if it had been rubbed over with blue paint accidentally, after it was finished, and every spectator would wish to clear off the upper colour and see

what was underneath. The misty appearance is given by resolvedly confusing, altering, or denying the form at the moment of painting it; and the virtue of the work is in the painter's having perfectly clear and sharp conception of all that he chooses to confuse, alter, or deny: so that his very confusion becomes suggestive—his alteration decorative—and his denial affirmative: and it is because there is an idea with and in—not *under*—every touch, that we find the objects rising into existence as we gaze.

487. Cattle in Water (1811?).

I imagine this to be one of the very few instances in which Turner made a *study* in oil. The subject was completed afterwards in a careful, though somewhat coarse, drawing, which defines the Norman window in the ruined wall, and is one of many expressions of Turner's feeling of the contrast between the pure rustic life of our own day, and the pride and terror of the past. This idea was more developed in the Liber Studiorum subject of the crypt of Kirkstall Abbey, with the cows lying down under the pillars, by the stagnant pool: again, in the Norham Castle of the Liber Studiorum, (nearly duplicated in the Norham of the River Scenery): and again in the Winchelsea-gate, of the Liber Studiorum. In France, churches are constantly turned into corn-markets: we in England are content with turning castles into cow-houses.

489. Cottage destroyed by an Avalanche (1812?).

If the reader will look back for a moment to the Abingdon, with its respectable country house, safe and slow carrier's waggon, decent church spire, and nearly motionless river, and then return to this Avalanche, he will see the range of Turner's sympathy, from the quietest to the wildest of subjects. We saw how he sympathised with the anger and energy of waves: here we have him in sympathy with anger and energy of stones. No one ever before had conceived a stone in *flight*, and this, as far as I am aware, is the first effort of painting to give inhabitants of the lowlands any idea of the terrific forces to which Alpine scenery owes a great part of its character, and most of its forms. Such things happen oftener and in quieter places than travellers suppose. The last time I walked up the Gorge de Gotteron, near Fribourg, I found a cottage which I had left safe two years before, reduced to just such a heap of splinters as this,

by some two or three tons of sandstone which had fallen on it from the cliff. There is nothing exaggerated in the picture; its only fault, indeed, is that the avalanche is not vapourous enough. In reality, the smoke of snow rises before an avalanche of any size, towards the lower part of its fall, like the smoke from a broadside of a ship of the line.

496. Bligh Sands (1815).

The notice of it in the published Catalogue is true and good. It is a fine picture of its class; and has more glow in its light, and more true gloom in its dark, than the great sea-pieces we have already seen. But the subject is, to me, wholly devoid of interest: the fishing-boats are too far off to show their picturesque details; the sea is too low to be sublime, and too dark to be beautiful; and the shore is as dull as sand can be. And yet, were I to choose between this picture and the next, I would infinitely rather have the bit of sand and sea-gulls than the "Carthaginian Empire."

499. The Decline of the Carthaginian Empire (1817).

This picture was painted as the sequel to that in Trafalgar-square, which is far the finer of the two, and was exhibited in the same year (1815) as the "Bligh Sands," and the celebrated "Crossing the Brook." This 1817 picture I think one of the deepest humiliations which Turner's art ever sustained. It is, in fact, a work in the sickness of change; giving warning of revolution of style and feeling, without, as yet, any decisive possession of the new principles: while the guide-book is entirely true in its description of its design, —"Claude was undoubtedly the model, aided by architectural drawings." It is, in fact, little more than an accumulation of Academy students' outlines, coloured brown. If we were to examine the figures and furniture of the foreground, piece by piece, we should indeed find much that was interesting, and much that no one but Turner could have done, but all wrought evidently for show, and with painful striving to set forth something that was not in his heart, and that never could get there. The passage in the note, at p. 370, from the first volume of "Modern Painters," will show the reader what place I have given, from the first, to this and other pictures of its kind: but, of all that I know, this is the worst; its raw brown colour giving the

city the appearance of having been built of stamped leather instead of stone. It is as if the brown demon, who was just going to be exorcised for ever, were putting out all his strength for the total destruction of a great picture by way of final triumph. The preparation for transition is seen in the noble colouring of the sky, which is already Turnerian of the second period; beautiful, natural, and founded on no previous work of art.

The text which Turner gave with this picture in the Academy catalogue of the period was as follows:—

"The Decline of the Carthaginian Empire. Rome, being determined on the overthrow of her hated rival, demanded of her such terms as might either force her into war, or ruin her by compliance. The enervated Carthaginians, in their anxiety for peace, consented to give up even their arms and their children.

"At Hope's delusive smile
The chieftain's safety and the mother's pride
Were to the insidious conqueror's grasp resigned;
While o'er the western wave the ensanguined sun,
In gathering huge, a stormy signal spread,
And set portentous."

This piece of verse, Turner's own, though, it must be confessed, not poetically brilliant, is at least interesting in its proof that he meant the sky—which, as we have seen, is the most interesting part of the picture—for a stormy one.

This is the third quotation from the "Fallacies of Hope" which occurs in the Academy catalogues. The course of his mind may be traced through the previous poetical readings very clearly. His first was given in 1798 (with a view of Coniston Fell) from "Paradise Lost," and there is a strange ominousness—as there is about much that great men do—in the choice of it. Consider how these four lines, the first he ever chose, express Turner's peculiar mission as distinguished from other landscapists:—

"Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise
From hill, or steaming lake, dusky or grey,
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honour to the world's great Author rise."

In this and the next year, with views of Dunstanborough, Norham, and Fountain's Abbey, &c., came various quotations, descriptive of atmospheric effects, from Thomson,

interspersed with two or three from Milton, and one from Mallet.

In 1800, some not very promising "anon" lines were attached to views of Dolbadern and Caernarvon Castles. Akenside and Ossian were next laid under contribution. Then Ovid, Callimachus, and Homer. At last, in 1812, the "Fallacies of Hope" begin, *apropos* of Hannibal's crossing the Alps: and this poem continues to be the principal text-book, with occasional recurrences to Thomson, one passage from Scott, and several from Byron. We shall come upon most of these as we pursue our round of the pictures: at least when all which are now national property are exhibited. The "Childe Harold," which is the only picture at present in a good light, is an important proof of his respect for the genius of Byron.

III. Characteristics of the Second Period, or that of Mastership

The reader may perhaps suppose that I limit Turner's course of conception too arbitrarily in assigning a single year as the period of its change. But the fact is, that though the human mind is prepared for its great transitions by many previous circumstances, and much gradual accumulation of knowledge, those transitions may, and frequently do, take place in a moment. One glance of the eye, one springing aside of a fancy, may cast a spark on the prepared pile; and the whole theory and practice of past life may be burnt up like stubble; and new foundations be laid, in the next hour, for the perpetual future toil of existence. This cannot, however, take place, with the utmost sharpness of catastrophe, in so difficult an art as that of painting: old habits will remain in the hand, and the knowledge necessary to carry out the new principles needs to be gradually gathered; still, the new conviction, whatever it be, will probably be expressed, within no very distant period from its acquirement, in some single picture, which will at once enable us to mark the old theories as rejected, at all events, then, if not before. This condemning and confirming picture is, in the present instance, I believe, the Bay of Baiæ.

For, in the year 1819, Turner exhibited the "Orange

Merchant," and "Richmond Hill," both in his first manner. In 1820, "Rome from the Vatican:" a picture which I have not seen. In 1821, *nothing:* a notable pause. In 1822, "What you will:" a picture I have not seen either, and which I am very curious about, as it may dispute the claims of first assertion with its successor. In 1823 came the "Bay of Baiæ."

Why I put the real time of change so far back as 1820 will appear, after I have briefly stated the characters in which the change consists.

Pictures belonging to the second period are technically distinguished from those of the first in three particulars:—

1. Colour takes the place of grey.
2. Refinement takes the place of force.
3. Quantity takes the place of mass.

First, Colour appears everywhere instead of grey. That is to say, Turner had discovered that the shaded sides of objects, as well as their illumined ones, are in reality of different, and often brilliant colours. His shadow is, therefore, no longer of one hue, but perpetually varied; whilst the lights, instead of being subdued to any conventional level, are always painted as near the brightness of natural colour as he can.

Secondly, Refinement takes the place of force. He had discovered that it is much more difficult to draw tenderly than ponderously, and that all the most beautiful things in nature depended on infinitely delicate lines. His effort is, therefore, always, now, to trace lines as finely, and shades as softly, as the point of the brush and feeling of hand are capable of doing; and the effects sought are themselves the most subtle and delicate which nature presents, rarely those which are violent. The change is the same as from the heavy touch and noisy preferences of a beginner in music, to the subdued and tender fingering or breathing of a great musician—rising, however, always into far more masterful stress when the occasion comes.

Thirdly, Quantity takes the place of mass. Turner had also ascertained, in the course of his studies, that nature was infinitely full, and that old painters had not only missed her pitch of hue, but her power of accumulation. He saw there were more clouds in any sky than ever had been painted; more trees in every forest, more crags on every hill side;

and he set himself with all his strength to proclaim this great fact of Quantity in the universe.

Now, so long as he introduced all these three changes in an instinctive and unpretending way, his work was noble; but the moment he tried to idealise, and introduced his principles for the sake of display, they led him into depths of error proportioned exactly to the extent of effort. His painting, at this period, of an English town, or a Welsh hill, was magnificent and faultless, but all his idealism, mythology, romance, and composition in general, were more or less wrong. He erred through all, and by reason of all—his great discoveries. He erred in *colour;* because not content with discerning the brilliancy of nature, he tried to enhance that brilliancy by every species of coloured accessary, until colour was killed by colour, and the blue skies and snowy mountains, which would have been lovely by themselves, were confused and vulgarised by the blue dresses and white complexions of the foreground figures. He erred in *refinement*, because, not content with the natural tenderness of tender things, he strove to idealise even strong things into gentleness, until his architecture became transparent, and his ground ghostly; and he erred finally, and chiefly, in *quantity*, because, in his enthusiastic perception of the fulness of nature, he did not allow for the narrowness of the human heart; he saw, indeed, that there were no limits to creation, but forgot that there were many to reception; he thus spoiled his most careful works by the very richness of invention they contained, and concentrated the materials of twenty noble pictures into a single failure.[1]

[1] The reader who has heard my writings respecting Turner characterised as those of a mere partizan, may be surprised at these expressions of blame, and perhaps suppose them an indication of some change of feeling. The following extract from the first volume of "Modern Painters" will show that I always held, and always expressed, precisely the same opinions respecting these Academy compositions:—

"The 'Caligula's Bridge,' 'Temple of Jupiter,' 'Departure of Regulus,' 'Ancient Italy,' 'Cicero's Villa,' and such others, come they from whose hand they may, I class under the general head of 'nonsense pictures.' There never can be any wholesome feeling developed in these preposterous accumulations, and where the artist's feeling fails, his art follows; so that the worst possible examples of Turner's colour are found in pictures of this class. Neither in his actual views of Italy has Turner ever caught her true spirit, except in the little vignettes to Rogers' Poems. The 'Villa of Galileo,' the nameless composition

The oil pictures exhibited in the Academy, as being always more or less done for show, and to produce imposing effect, display these weaknesses in the greatest degree; the drawings in which he tried to do his best are next in failure, but the drawings in which he simply liked his subject, and painted it for its own simple sake, are wholly faultless and magnificent.

All the works of this period are, however, essentially Turnerian; original in conception, and unprecedented in treatment; they are, therefore, when fine, of far greater value than those of the first period; but as being more daring, they involve greater probabilities of error or failure.

One more point needs notice in them. They generally are painted with far more enjoyment. Master now of himself and his subjects, at rest as to the choice of the thing to be done, and triumphing in perpetually new perceptions of the beauty of the nature he had learned to interpret, his work seems poured out in perpetual rejoicing; his sympathy with the pomp, splendour, and gladness of the world increases, while he forgets its humiliation and its pain; they cannot now stay the career of his power, nor check the brightness of his exultation. From the dens of the serpent and the dragon he ascends into soft gardens and balmy glades; and from the roll of the waggon on the dusty road, or labour of the boat along the stormy shore, he turns aside to watch the dance of the nymph, and listen to the ringing of the cymbal.

with stone pines, the several villa moonlights, and the convent compositions in the voyage of Columbus, are altogether exquisite; but this is owing chiefly to their simplicity, and perhaps, in some measure, to their smallness of size. None of his large pictures at all equal them; the 'Bay of Baiæ' is encumbered with material, it contains ten times as much as is necessary to a good picture, and yet is so crude in colour as to look unfinished. The 'Palestrina' is full of raw white, and has a look of Hampton Court about its long avenue; the 'Modern Italy' is purely English in its near foliage; it is composed from Tivoli material, enriched and arranged most dexterously, but it has not the virtue of the real thing."—("Modern Painters," Vol. I., p. 122.)

IV. Pictures of the Second Period.

505. The Bay of Baiæ (1823).
The Turnerian quotation with this picture

"Waft me to sunny Baiæ's shore,"

marks the spirit of exultation of the second period very interestingly, and the immediate result of it, as bearing on this subject, seems to be a discordance in the temper of contemplation. We have an accumulation of ruins, regarded with the utmost cheerfulness and satisfaction. The gods sit among the ruins, but do not attempt to mend any, having apparently come there as tourist gods. Though there are boats and figures on the shore, and a shepherd on the left, the greater part of the landscape is very desolate in its richness—full of apples and oranges, with nobody to eat them; of pleasant waters, with nobody to drink; of pleasant shades, with nobody to be cool; only a snake and a rabbit for inheritors of all that dominion of hill and forest:—we perceive, however, with consternation, by the two streams which have been diverted from the river to fall through the arches of the building near the bridge, that Nobody must have succeeded in establishing a mill among the ruins. Concerning which, it must be remembered that, though Turner had now broken through accepted rules of art, he had not broken through the accepted laws of idealism; and mills were, at this time, necessary and orthodox in poetical landscape, being supposed to give its elements otherwise ethereal and ambrosial, an agreeable earthy flavour, like truffles in pies.

If, however, we examine who these two figures in the foreground are, we shall presently accept this beautiful desolation of landscape with better understanding. The published catalogue misses out just the important words in Turner's description of his picture, "The Bay of Baiæ, *with the Story of Apollo and the Sybil.*" The general reader may be glad to be reminded that the Cumæan Sybil, Deiphobe, being in her youth beloved by Apollo, and the god having promised to grant her whatever she would ask, she, taking up a handful of earth, asked that she might live for as many

years as there were grains of dust in her hand. She obtained her petition, and Apollo would have given her also perpetual youth, in return for her love; but she denied him, and wasted into the long ages; known at last only by her voice. We are rightly led to think of her here, as the type of the ruined beauty of Italy; foreshowing, so long ago, her low murmurings of melancholy prophecy, with all the unchanged voices of her sweet waves and mountain echoes. The fable seems to have made a strong impression on Turner's mind, the picture of the "Golden Bough" being a sequel to this; showing the Lake of Avernus, and Deiphobe, now bearing the golden bough—the guide of Æneas to the shades. In both these pictures there is a snake in the foreground among the fairest leafage, a type of the terror, or temptation, which is associated with the lovely landscapes; and it is curious that Turner seems to have exerted all his strength to give the most alluring loveliness to the soft descents of the Avernus Lake.

There is a curious sign of the remaining influences of the theories of idealism on Turner in the treatment of the stone pines in the "Bay of Baiæ." It was the rule at this period that trees and all other important features of landscape were to be idealised, and idealisation consisted in the assemblage of various natural beauties into a whole, which was to be more beautiful than nature; accordingly, Turner takes a stone pine to begin with, and keeps its general look of close shade and heaviness of mass; but as boughs of stone pine are apt to be cramped and rugged, and crampedness and ruggedness are un-ideal, he rejects the pine nature in the branches, and gives them the extremities of a witch elm! We shall see presently his farther progress in pine painting.

The main fault of the composition is, however, in the over indulgence of his new triumph in quantity. I suppose most observers, when first they come before this picture, are struck mainly by the beautiful blue distant sea and dark trees, which latter they probably dislike; the rest of the work appears to them a mere confusion of detail, rich, indeed, but hardly worth disentangling. The following procedure will, I think, under these circumstances be found serviceable. Take a stiff piece of pasteboard, about

eight inches square, and cut out in the centre of it an oblong opening, two and a half inches by three. Bring this with you to the picture, and standing three or four feet from it, according to your power of sight, look through the opening in the card at the middle distance, holding the card a foot or two from the eye, so as to turn the picture, piece by piece, into a series of small subjects. Examine these subjects quietly, one by one; sometimes holding the opening horizontal, sometimes upright, according to the bit you are examining, and you will find, I believe, in a very little while, that each of these small subjects becomes more interesting to you, and seems to have more in it, than the whole picture did before.

It is of course both a merit and a marvel, that these separate pieces should be so beautiful, but it is a great fault that they should be so put together as to destroy their interest: not that they are ill composed, but there is simply a surfeit of material. No composition whatever could render such a quantity digestible; nay, the very goodness of the composition is harmful, for everything so leads into everything else, that without the help of the limiting cardboard it is impossible to stop—we are dragged through arch after arch, and round tower after tower, never getting leave to breathe until we are jaded;[1] whereas, in an ill-composed picture, such as one of Breughel's, we feel in a moment that it is an accumulation of pretty fragments; and, accepting it on these terms, may take one bird or tree at a time, and go over as much of the picture as we like, keeping the rest till to-morrow.

The colour of this picture, take it all in all, is unsatisfactory; the brown demon is not quite exorcised; and although, if the foliage of the foreground be closely examined, it will be found full of various hue, the greens are still too subdued. Partly, the deadness of effect is owing to change in the colour; many of the upper glazings, as in the dress of the Apollo, and in the tops of the pine-trees, have cracked and chilled; what was once golden has become brown; many violet and rose tints have vanished from the distant hills, and the blue of the sea

[1] On the incapacity of the imagination to receive more than a certain quantity of excitement, see farther, "Modern Painters" Vol. III., chap. 10, § 14.

has become pale.[1] But as far as regards refinement in drawing, this picture nobly represents the work of the middle period. Examine, for example, carefully, the drawing of the brown tendrils and lighter leaves which encompass the stem of the tree on the left, then the bough drawing, spray by spray, in the trees themselves, then the little bit of bay underneath the Castle of Baiæ, just close to the stems; go back afterwards to the "View on Clapham Common," and you will feel the change sufficiently.

It is because instances of this refinement, together with the excessive delight in quantity, are already seen in the "Richmond Hill," exhibited in 1819 (in possession of the nation), that I think the origin of Turner's second manner cannot be put later than 1820.

507. Scene from Boccaccio (1828).

Turner's title in the Academy Catalogue is "Boccaccio relating the Tale of the Bird-cage."

Of the peculiar, and almost the only serious weakness of Turner's mind, brought out as it was in his second period, with respect to *figures*, this, and the Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (517), are very lamentable instances. I shall allude again to both these pictures in analyzing his figure-treatment in the Phryne; but except as subjects for curious study, they are of no value whatsoever.

508. Ulysses deriding Polyphemus (1829).

I have just given my reason for dating the commencement of Turner's second manner as far back as 1820. But as in his first period it takes about ten years before he shows his full power in that manner, as in the "Abingdon" and "Bligh Sands;" so in this second phase, it takes nearly ten years before he feels entirely at ease, and brings all his resources into play. The Yorkshire, and River Scenery drawings, 1819 to 1826, are still very quiet in colour; the commencement of the England series, 1827, marked fuller development of the second manner; yet all the drawings of 1827 and 1828, (Launceston, Buckfastleigh, Valle-Crucis, Okehampton, &c.) are restrained to grey and brown companionship with the

[1] I do not at present express any opinion as to the degree in which these changes have been advanced or arrested by the processes to which the pictures have recently been subjected, since the light in which they are placed does not permit a sufficient examination of them to warrant any such expression.

Yorkshire group; but in 1829, this "Polyphemus" asserts his perfect power, and is, therefore, to be considered as the *central picture* in Turner's career. And it is in some sort a type of his own destiny.

He had been himself shut up by one-eyed people, in a cave "darkened with laurels" (getting no good, but only evil, from all the fame of the great of long ago)—he had seen his companions eaten in the cave by the one-eyed people—(many a painter of good promise had fallen by Turner's side in those early toils of his); at last, when his own time had like to have come, he thrust the rugged pine-trunk—all a-blaze—(rough nature, and the light of it)—into the faces of the one-eyed people, left them tearing their hair in the cloud-banks—got out of the cave in a humble way, under a sheep's belly—(helped by the lowliness and gentleness of nature, as well as by her ruggedness and flame)—and got away to open sea as the dawn broke over the Enchanted Islands.

The printed catalogue describes this picture as "gorgeous with *sunset* colours." The first impression on most spectators would, indeed, be that it was evening, but chiefly because we are few of us in the habit of seeing summer sunrise. The time is necessarily morning—the Cyclops had been blinded as soon as he slept; Ulysses and his companions escaped when he drove out the flock in the early morning, and they put instantly to sea. The somewhat gloomy and deeply coloured tones of the lower crimson clouds, and of the stormy blue bars underneath them, are always given by Turner to skies which rise over any scene of death, or one connected with any deathful memories.[1] But the morning light is unmistakeably indicated by the pure whiteness of the mists, and upper mountain snows, above the Polyphemus; at evening they would have been in an orange glow. The white column of smoke which rises from the mountain slope is a curious instance of Turner's careful reading of his text. (I presume him to have read Pope only.)

> "The land of Cyclops lay in prospect near,
> The voice of goats and bleating flocks we hear,
> And from their mountains rising smokes appear."

Homer says simply:—"We were so near the Cyclops' land, that we could see smoke, and hear the voices, and the

[1] For instances, see "Modern Painters," Vol. IV., ch. 18, § 24.

bleating of the sheep and goats." Turner was, however, so excessively fond of opposing a massive form with a light wreath of smoke (perhaps almost the only proceeding which could be said with him to have become a matter of recipe [1]), that I do not doubt we should have had some smoke at any rate, only it is made more prominent in consequence of Pope's lines. The Cyclops' cave is low down at the shore—where the red fire is—and, considering that Turner was at this time Professor of Perspective to the Royal Academy, and that much outcry has lately been raised against supposed Pre-Raphaelite violations of perspective law, I think we may not unwarrantably inquire how our Professor supposed that *that* Cyclops could ever have got into *that* cave.

For the naval and mythological portion of the picture, I have not much to say: its real power is in its pure nature, and not in its fancy. If Greek ships ever resembled this one, Homer must have been a calumnious and foul-mouthed person in calling them continually "black ships;" and the entire conception, so far as its idealism and water-carriage are concerned, is merely a composition of the Lord Mayor's procession with a piece of ballet-scenery. The Cyclops is fine, passionate enough, and not disgusting in his hugeness; but I wish he were out of the way, as well as the sails and flags, that we might see the mountains better. The island rock is tunnelled at the bottom—on classical principles. The sea grows calm all at once, that it may reflect the sun; and one's first impression is that Leucothea is taking Ulysses right on the Goodwin sands. But,—granting the local calmness,—the burnished glow upon the sea, and the breezy stir in the blue darkness about the base of the cliffs, and the noble space of receding sky, vaulted with its bars of cloudy gold, and the upper peaks of the snowy Sicilian promontory, are all as perfect and as great as human work can be. This sky is beyond comparison the finest that exists in Turner's oil paintings. Next to it comes that of the "Slaver;" and third, that of the "Temeraire."

511. View of Orvieto (1830).

Once a very lovely picture, and still perfect in many parts: the tree, perhaps, the best bit of foliage painting in the rooms. But it is of no use to enter into circumstantial

[1] See, for very marked example, vignette of "Gate of Theseus," in illustrations to Byron.

criticism, or say anything about its details, while it hangs in its present place. For all serious purposes, it might just as well be hung at the top of Saint Paul's.

513. Childe Harold's Pilgrimage (1832).

Turner's quotation was the one given in the Catalogue, which, also, truly describes the general motives of the picture. It *was*, once, quite the loveliest work of the second period, but it is now a mere wreck. The fates by which Turner's later pictures perish are as various as they are cruel: the best work of the middle time, "Cologne," free from all taint of idealism, and as safe and perfect as the day it was painted, was torn to rags on a railway two years ago; the greater number, whatever care be taken of them, fade into strange consumption and pallid shadowing of their former selves. Their effects were either attained by so light glazing of one colour over another, that the upper colour, in a year or two, sank entirely into its ground, and was seen no more; or else, by the stirring and kneading together of colours chemically discordant, which gathered into angry spots; or else, by laying on liquid tints with too much vehicle in them, which cracked as they dried; or solid tints, with too little vehicle in them, which dried into powder and fell off; or painting the whole on an ill-prepared canvas, from which the picture peeled like the bark from a birch-tree; or using a wrong white, which turned black; or a wrong red, which turned grey; or a wrong yellow, which turned brown. But, one way or another, all but eight or ten of his later pictures have gone to pieces, or worse than pieces—ghosts, which are supposed to be representations of their living presence. This "Childe Harold" is a ghost only. What amount of change has passed upon it may be seen by examining the bridge over the river on the right. There either was, or was intended to be, a drawbridge or wooden bridge over the gaps between the two ruined piers. But either the intention of bridge was painted over, and has penetrated again through the disappearing upper colour; or (which I rather think) the realisation of bridge was once there, and is disappearing itself. Either way, the change is fatal; and there is hardly a single passage of colour throughout the cool tones of the picture which has not lost nearly as much. It would be less baneful if all the colours faded

together amicably; but they are in a state of perpetual revolution; one staying as it was, and the others blackening or fading about it, and falling out with it, in irregular degrees, never more by any reparation to be reconciled. Nevertheless, even in its present state, all the landscape on this right hand portion of the picture is exquisitely beautiful—founded on faithful reminiscences of the defiles of Narni, and the roots of the Apennines, seen under purple evening light. The tenderness of the mere painting, by which this light is expressed, is not only far beyond his former work, but it is so great that the eye can hardly follow the gradations of hue; it can feel, but cannot trace them. On what mere particles of colour the effect depends may be well seen in the central tower of the distant city, on the hill beyond the bridge. The side of it turned away from the light receives a rosy reflection from the other buildings in the town; and this reflection will be found, on looking close, to be expressed with three touches of vermilion, laid on the blue distant ground, the touches being as fine as the filament of a feather. Their effect depends on their own personal purity, and on the blue ground showing between them; they must be put on precisely in the right place and quantity at once, and be left; they cannot be stirred or disturbed afterwards, or all would be lost. The common ideas about oil painting—that it is a daubing and ponderous process—that it admits of alteration to any extent—that a touch is to be gradually finished up, or softened down, into shape; and so on—are at once, and most wholesomely, set at nought by such work as this. It is very interesting to walk back from this "Childe Harold" to the "View on Clapham Common," and observe the intensity of the change of subject and method: the thick, plastered, rolling white paint of the one, and the silvery films of the other; the heavy and hot yellow of the one, and the pale rosy rays of the other, touched with pencillings so light, that, if the ground had been a butterfly's wing, they would not have stirred a grain of its azure dust.

The respective skill of each piece of painting may be practically tested by any artist who likes to try to copy both. The early work will be found quite within reach; but the late work wholly unapproachable. He would be a rash painter, whatever his name, whatever his supposed rank,

who should accept a challenge to copy as much as three inches square of any part of that "Childe Harold" distance.

But the change in choice of subject is more remarkable still. Age usually makes men prosaic and cold; and we look back to the days of youth as alone those of the burning vision and the brightening hope: we may perhaps gain in kindness and unselfishness, but we lose our impressibleness. The old man may praise and help the youth's enthusiasm—may even be wise enough to envy it—but can seldom share it: the sympathy which he grants to the passion or the imagination of younger hearts, is granted with a smile, and he turns away presently to his brave prose of daily toil, and brave dealing with daily fact. But in Turner, the course of advancing mind was the exact reverse of this: we find him, as a boy, at work, with heavy hand and undiverted eye, on the dusty Clapham Common road: but, as a man in middle life, wandering in dreams in the Italian twilight. As a boy, we find him alternately satirical and compassionate: all-observant of human action, sorrow, and weakness: curious of fishermen and fisher-wives' quarrels —watchful of Jason's footstep over the dry bones to the serpent's den. But as the man in middle life, he mocks no more—he fears, he weeps no more: his foregrounds now are covered with flowers; the dust and the dry dead bones are all passed by: the sky is calm and clear—the rack of the clouds, and rending of the salt winds are forgotten. His whole soul is set to watch the wreaths of mist among the foldings of the hills; and listen to the lapse of the river waves in their fairest gliding. And thus the richest and sweetest passages of Byron, which usually address themselves most to the imagination of youth, became an inspiration to Turner in his later years: and an inspiration so compelling, that, while he only illustrated here and there a detached passage from other poets, he endeavoured, as far as in him lay, to delineate the whole mind of Byron. He fastened on incidents related in other poems; this is the only picture he ever painted to illustrate the poet's own mind and pilgrimage.

And the illustration is imperfect, just because it misses the *manliest* characters of Byron's mind: Turner was fitter to paint Childe Harold when he himself could both mock

and weep, than now, when he can only dream: and, beautiful as the dream may be, he but joins in the injustice too many have done to Byron, in dwelling rather on the passionate than the reflective and analytic elements of his intellect. I believe no great power is sent on earth to be wasted, but that it must, in some sort, do an appointed work: and Byron would not have done this work, if he had only given melody to the passions, and majesty to the pangs, of men. His clear insight into their foibles; his deep sympathy with justice, kindness, and courage; his intense reach of pity, never failing, however far he had to stoop to lay his hand on a human heart, have all been lost sight of, either in too fond admiration of his slighter gifts, or in narrow judgment of the errors which burst into all the more flagrant manifestation, just because they were inconsistent with half his soul, and could never become incarnate, accepted, silent sin, but had still to fight for their hold on him. Turner was strongly influenced, from this time forward, by Byron's love of nature; but it is curious how unaware he seems of the sterner war of his will and intellect; and how little this quiet and fair landscape, with its delicate ruin and softened light, does in reality express the tones of thought into which Harold falls oftenest, in that watchful and weary pilgrimage.

The failure, both as a picture and as a type, is chiefly on the left hand, where the scene is confused, impossible, and unaffecting. I believe most spectators will enjoy the other portions of the composition best by treating it as I have asked them to do the Bay of Baiæ; using, however, a somewhat larger opening for sight, so as to include at need the two reaches of the river.

There are some noticeable matters, here also, in the drawing of the stone pine. We saw that those in the Bay of Baiæ had no resemblance to the real tree, except, as I said, in shade and heavy-headedness. But this pine has something of the natural growth of the tree, both in its flatter top and stiffer character of bough: and thus, though the leaves are not yet right pine leaves, naturalism is gradually prevailing over idealism. One step farther, and in the third period we find the pine in the Phryne (No. 521) wholly unconventionalised, and perfect in expression of jagged leaf. The wild fantasticism in the twisting of the bough is, however,

studied from the Scotch fir, not the stone pine; for Turner had not had, for a long time, any opportunity of studying pines, and was obliged to take the nearest thing he could get from nature; when his conventional round mass with witch-elm sprays, was for ever forbidden to him. But through all these phases of increasing specific accuracy, the bough drawing, considered as a general expression of woody character, was quite exquisite. It is so delicate in its finish of curves, that, at first, the eye does not follow them; but if you look close into the apparently straight bough, the lowest and longest on the left of this pine in the "Childe Harold," you will find there is not a single hair's-breadth of it without its soft changes of elastic curve and living line. If you can draw at all accurately and delicately, you cannot receive a more valuable lesson than you will by outlining this bough, of its real size, with scrupulous care, and then outlining and comparing with it some of the two-pronged barbarisms of Wilson,[1] in the tree on the left of his "Villa of Mæcenas" (No. 108).

V. General Characteristics of the Third Period

As Turner became more and more accustomed to, and satisfied in, the principles of art he had introduced, his mind naturally dwelt upon them with less of the pride of discovery, and turned more and more to the noble subjects of natural colour and effect, which he found himself now able to represent. He began to think less of showing or trying what he *could* do, and more of actually doing this or that beautiful thing. It was no more a question with him how many alternations of blue with gold he could crowd into a canvass, but how nearly he could reach the actual blue of the Bay of Uri, when the dawn was on its golden cliffs. I believe, also, that in powerful minds there is generally, towards age, a return to the superstitious love of Nature which they felt in their youth: and assuredly, as Turner drew towards old age, the aspect of mechanical effort and ambitious accumulation fade from his work, and a deep imaginative delight, and tender rest in the loveliness of what he had learned to see in Nature,

[1] For farther illustration of this subject see "Modern Painters," Vol. III., ch. ix., § 14, &c.

take their place. It is true that when goaded by the reproaches cast upon his work, he would often meet contempt with contempt, and paint, not, as in his middle period, to prove his power, but merely to astonish, or to defy, his critics. Often, also, he would *play* with his Academy work, and engage in colour tournaments with his painter-friends; the spirit which prompted such jests or challenges being natural enough to a mind now no longer in a state of doubt, but conscious of confirmed power. But here, again, the evil attendant on such play, or scorn, becomes concentrated in the Academy pictures; while the real strength and majesty of his mind are seen undiminished only in the sketches which he made during his summer journeys for his own pleasure, and in the drawings he completed from them.

Another notable characteristic of this period is, that though the mind was in a state of comparative repose, and capable of play at idle moments, it was, in its depth, infinitely more serious than heretofore—nearly all the subjects on which it dwelt having now some pathetic meaning. Formerly he painted the Victory in her triumph, but now the Old Temeraire in her decay; formerly Napoleon at Marengo, now Napoleon at St. Helena; formerly the Ducal Palace at Venice, now the Cemetery at Murano; formerly the Life of Vandevelde, now the Burial of Wilkie.

Lastly, though in most respects, this is the crowning period of Turner's genius, in a few, there are evidences in it of approaching decline. As we have seen, in each former phase of his efforts, that the full character was not developed till about its central year, so in this last the full character was not developed till the year 1840, and that character involved, in the very fulness of its imaginative beauty, some loss of distinctness; some absence of deliberation in arrangement; and, as we approach nearer and nearer the period of decline, considerable feebleness of hand. These several deficiencies, when they happen to be united in one of the fantasies struck out during retouching days at the Academy, produce results which, at the time they appeared, might have justified a regretful criticism, provided only that criticism had been offered under such sense of the painter's real greatness as might have rendered it acceptable or serviceable to him; whereas, being expressed in terms as insulting to his then existing power as forgetful of his past, they

merely checked his efforts, challenged his caprices, and accelerated his decline.

Technically speaking, there are few trenchant distinctions between works of the second and third period. The most definite is, that the *figures* of the second period have faces and bodies more or less inclining to flesh colour; but in the third period the faces at least are white-looking like chalked masks (why we shall inquire presently), and the limbs usually white, with scarlet reflected lights. It is also to be observed that after the full development of the third manner, in 1840, no more foliage is satisfactorily painted, and it rarely occurs in any prominent mass.

VI. Pictures of the Third Period

518. Apollo and Daphne (1837).

Although this, like nearly all the works prepared for the Academy, is injured by excessive quantity, and is painfully divided into two lateral masses, with an unimportant centre, those lateral masses are nearly unequalled in beauty of mountain drawing. By looking back to the "Hesperides," and comparing the masses of mountain there with these, the *naturalism* of the last period will be easily felt. All these mountains in the "Daphne" are possible—nay, they are almost reminiscences of real ranges on the flanks of Swiss valleys; the few scattered stones of the Hesperides have become innumerable ridges of rock; the overhanging cliffs of the Hesperides have become possible and beautiful slopes; the dead colours of the Hesperides are changed into azure and amber. The reader will find farther references to the mountain drawing of this "Daphne" in "Modern Painters;"[1] but it is not worth while to insist upon them here, as it may be long before the picture is placed where any of its more subtle merit can be seen.

It is necessary, however, that the reader should in this case, as in that of the "Bay of Baiæ," understand Turner's meaning in the figures, and their relation to the landscape. Daphne was the daughter of the river Peneus, the most fertilising of the Greek rivers, by the goddess Terra (the earth). She represents, therefore, the spirit of all foliage, as

[1] Vol. I., p. 30.

springing from the earth, watered by rivers ;—rather than the laurel merely. Apollo became enamoured of her, on the shore of the Peneus itself—that is to say, either in the great vale of Larissa, or in that of Tempe. The scene is here meant for Tempe, because it opens to the sea : it is not in the least *like* Tempe, which is a narrow ravine : but it expressed the accepted idea of the valley as far as Turner could interpret it, it having long been a type to us moderns of all lovely glens or vales descending from the mountains to the sea. The immediate cause of Apollo's servitude to Daphne was his having insulted Cupid, and mocked at his arrows. Cupid answered, simply, "Thy bow strikes all things, Apollo, but mine shall strike *Thee*."

The boy god is seen in the picture behind Apollo and Daphne. Afterwards, when Daphne flies and Apollo pursues, Ovid compares them to a dog of Gaul, coursing a hare—the greyhound and hare Turner has, therefore, put into the foreground. When Daphne is nearly exhausted, she appeals to her father, the river Peneus—"gazing at his waves"—and he transforms her into a laurel on his shore. That is to say, the life of the foliage—the child of the river and the earth—appeals again to the river, when the sun would burn it up ; and the river protects it with its flow and spray, keeping it green for ever.

So then the whole picture is to be illustrative of the union of the rivers and the earth ; and of the perpetual help and delight granted by the streams, in their dew, to the earth's foliage. Observe, therefore, that Turner has put his whole strength into the expression of the roundings of the hills under the influence of the torrents ; has insisted on the loveliest features of mountain scenery when full of rivers, in the quiet and clear lake on the one side, and the gleaming and tender waterfalls on the other : has covered his foreground with the richest foliage, and indicated the relations of the whole to civilisation in the temples and village of the plain. It was quite natural that Turner should suppose Tempe a larger vale than it is, from Ovid's own description of the rivers meeting in it. "There the rivers meet : Spercheus crowned with poplar ; and disquieted Enipeus, and aged Apidanus, and gentle Amphrysus, and Æas, and the other rivers, who, where the impulse urges them, lead to the sea their waves, wearied with winding ; only Inachus is

not there ; he, hidden in his cave, increases his springs with weeping."

519. Regulus leaving Rome (1837).

A picture very disgraceful to Turner, and as valueless as any work of the third period can be ; done wholly against the instincts of the painter at this time, in wicked relapse into the old rivalry with Claude. The great fault is the confusion of the radiation of light from the sun with its reflection—one proof, among thousands of other manifest ones, that truth and greatness were only granted to Turner on condition of his absolutely following his natural feeling, and that if ever he contradicted it, that moment his knowledge and his art failed him also.

521. Phryne going to the Bath (1838).

We have already ascertained the meaning, and noted the principal beauty of this picture, which, however, we must pause at again, for it is a work of primal importance, as representative of the last labours of Turner. No other work, so far studied, exists of his third period, and, by rare good fortune, of all the pictures dating after 1820 in the possession of the nation, this is the least injured. I cannot trace positive deterioration in any part of it, except the sky ; and I believe it to be otherwise very nearly safe, and accurately representative of what the painter's later work was when it first appeared in the Academy, and was intended by him to remain. And this being so, the question is suggested to us very forcibly, what could be meant by those chalk-faced and crimson-limbed figures, and what was his theory respecting the function of figures in landscape?

I think, in the first place, the reader will admit, from what he has seen of the earlier Turner paintings, that he is distinguished from all other modern landscape painters by his strong human sympathy. It may be a disputed point—and I do not care here to agitate it—whether Claude's "St. George and the Dragon," or his "Moses and the Burning Bush," or Salvator's "Finding of Ædipus," or Gaspar Poussin's "Dido and Eneas," are expressive of such sympathy or not ; but, among modern painters, it is indisputable that the figures are merely put in to make the pictures gay, and rarely claim any greater interest than may attach to the trade of the city, or labour of the field. Sometimes lovers in a glade, or gypsies on a common, or travellers caught in

rain, may render more sentimental or dramatic the fall of shade or shower; but, beyond this, no motive for sympathy is ever presented, and, for the most part, the scarlet bodice, or rustic blouse, are all that we are supposed to require, to give us the sense of motion in the street, or life in the landscape. But we have seen that in almost every one of Turner's subjects there is some affecting or instructive relation to it in the figures; that the incident he introduces is rarely shallow in thought, but reaches either tragedy, as in the "Hesperides," or humour, as in the "Calais Pier;" and that in his first carrying out of these thoughts he showed a command of human expression no less striking than his grasp of pictorial effects. How is it then, that, in his time of fully developed strength, the figure has become little more than a chalk puppet?

First. The usual complaints made about his *bad* figure drawing arise, in reality, from the complainant's not being sufficiently sensible of the nobleness of *good* figure drawing. Figures cannot be drawn even moderately or endurably well, unless the whole life be given to their study; and *any* figure which a professed landscape painter can paint, is still so far from the standard of real truth and excellence, that it is better no serious attempt whatever should be made in that direction. Each figure in Callcott's landscapes for instance, while it sets itself up for being right, is so miserably inferior to the worst and idlest outline of Mulready or Wilkie, that it only sickens the heart of any man who feels what figure painting should be; much more if he thinks of Titian or Veronese: the first impulse of such a just judge would be to snatch up a brush, and dash the palsied bit of draperied doll half out, and give it a pair of red dots for eyes, and so leave it—*claiming* thus to be no more than it really is—abortive and despicable. And thus it is, for one reason, that just as Turner feels the more and more what figures should be, he paints them less and less.

Secondly. Supposing that the power of figure-drawing were attainable by the landscape painter, the time necessary to complete the delineation of a crowd in one foreground would be more than is necessary in general for all the landscapes of the year. Supposing those figures in the "Phryne" properly and completely painted, certainly no more than that one picture could have been painted in the year. Now

the main power of Turner's mind was in its fertility of conception; and it would have been wrong, even if it had been possible, for him to leave myriads of beautiful landscape imaginations unrecorded, while he was rounding shoulders and ancles from academy models. But, once grant that the figures are to be left sketchy, and it rests with those who blame Turner to show that any other way of sketching them is better than his. They have now a fair opportunity of trying. Let them copy the landscape of this "Phryne" as it is; then put in the figures in their own improved way: and I believe they will find they have spoiled their picture.

Thirdly. Whenever figures are brilliantly dressed, or in full light in a sunny landscape, they always lead the eye, and throw the rest of the scene into more or less retiring colour. Now, in pursuit of his newly discovered facts about colour, Turner had reached the top of his scale, or nearly so, in the sky, and the foliage, and the hills; he felt, however, still that the figures ought to lead the light—and nothing *would* lead it, in pictures of so high a key, but absolute white, and masses of pure colour, which accordingly he gives them. I think, however, this was an error, correspondent exactly to the error on the opposite side, which made the early landscapists paint their shades too black, to *throw out* their lights. So Turner paints his figures too white, to *subdue* his lights. Both carried out a principle, true in itself, too far.

I say this of Turner with diffidence, however, not having yet made up my mind about these later figures; only I know that he never raised his figures to so high a key in his drawings, and I think the result was in these more satisfactory.

Fourthly. Although there is much to shock, and more to surprise the eye in this late figure painting, there are merits in it which serious study would show to be of a high order. The colours used are too violent; but the choice of these colours, and the adjustment of their relations, are always right. Pure vermilion does not rightly represent the transparent scarlets of flesh; but the fact that transparent scarlets *are* in flesh, instead of grey and brown, is a noble fact, which it was better to perceive and declare, however imperfectly, than, for the sake of affronting nobody, to keep to the old and generally accepted colours. And

the infinitudes of gradation, and accurately reflected colour, which Turner has wrought into these strange figure groups, are nearly as admirable as the other portions of this work; only the admirableness is of a kind which is only artistical, and only to be perceived by artists, so that I do not trouble the general reader by farther insisting on it. Without any artistical knowledge, however, he may perceive one kind of merit in these figures—their freedom, fire, and frequent grace of action; and a little watching of this involved troop of girls, tossing the white statue of Cupid far into the air out of the midst of them, will enable the spectator to conceive for himself, merely a little rejecting or modifying the Turnerian eccentricities, what such a wild flight of Greek girl-gladness must have been, infinitely more earnestly and justly than any, the most careful and perfect Academy drawing (that I have seen) by modern hands.

Lastly.—Notwithstanding his deep sympathy and imaginative power, there was, throughout Turner's later life, an infirmity in his figure conception which has always been to me, out of the whole multitude of questions and mysteries that have come across me concerning art, the most inexplicable. With the most exquisite sense of grace and proportion in other forms, he continually admits awkwardnesses and errors in his figures which a child of ten years old would have avoided. Sometimes, as in his drawing of Gosport, he twists a head right round upon the shoulders: constantly he makes the head half a foot too high, as in the figure of Apollo in the "Bay of Baiæ": legs that will not join the trunk are frequent also: but his favourite mismanagement of all is, putting one eye an inch or two higher than the other. As I have just stated, this is, for the most part, wholly inexplicable to me: all that I can guess respecting it is, that he had got so much into the habit of weaving natural forms—rocks, boughs, and waves—into exactly the shapes that would best help his composition, that when he came to an unsubdueable form in man or animal, he could not endure the resistance, and lifted features out of their places as he would have raised or dropped one window in a tower whose equalities tormented him; and wrung a neck as remorselessly as he would have twisted a bough, to get it into the light or shade he wanted. I do not mean, of course, to advance this as an excuse for the proceeding, but

as a conceivable motive for it. The infirmity which prevented his being hurt by such derangements, was, I believe, essential to his having become a landscape painter at all. If he had had as fine an eye for human beauty as he had keen interest in human feeling, he would assuredly have been drawn into pure historical painting: and we should have had (oil painting not being properly understood among us) a series of imperfectly executed figure subjects, uniting Tintoret's fancy with Veronese's colour, but hollow and false in conception, because figure models suggestive of colour do not exist in the real life around us, and he would have pursued a false ideal, like Etty. He was not permitted thus to waste his life, but his escape from such a fate was, I believe, very narrow. He studied figure painting carefully, and not unsuccessfully, for some time; and when he was about seventeen, painted a portrait of himself, which will bear no very disadvantageous comparison with the earlier and firmly handled portraits of Watson and Raeburn.[1] A picture of a smith's shop, which seems to have been painted, soon after, in emulation of Wilkie, perhaps convinced him of his weakness in more delicate figure drawing, and delivered him for ever to the teaching of the clouds and hills. With what intent, or against how great a sense of failure he persisted in occasional experiments on the figure, such as the "Boccaccio" and "Shadrach," I cannot tell; but the infirmity increased with age: and in the "Ariadne" of No. 525, the public may see, as far as I am aware, the worst figure that Turner ever painted, and perhaps that was ever painted by anybody. I have not the least wish to conceal Turner's defects (or any one else's); on the contrary, I think the denial of defects in heroes, one of the most baneful abuses of truth of which the world is guilty. But though the faults of a great or good man should never be extenuated, they should be much forgiven, and at times forgotten. It is wrong and unwise to expose defects in a

[1] This portrait he gave to his housekeeper, who bequeathed it to me, and it is now in my possession, fortunately in a perfect state of preservation. The likeness must have been a striking one, for all who knew Turner well can trace the features and the glance of the old man through the glow of youth; and recognise the form of the grey forehead under the shadow of the long flowing chestnut hair. Another portrait, also by his own hand, painted later in life, is said to exist in the National collection.

time or place when they take away our power of feeling virtues; and I should be glad if all these figure pictures, with the "Fall of Carthage," the "Regulus," and one or two of the last works (between 1845 and 1850), were placed in a condemned cell, or chamber of humiliation, by themselves; always, however, in good light, so that people who wished to see the sins of Turner, might examine them to their entire satisfaction—but not exhibited where they only serve to prompt and attract ridicule, suggest doubts of real excellence, and mingle pain with enjoyment, and regret with admiration.

I cannot, however, leave this Phryne, without once more commending it to the reader's most careful study. Its foliage is exquisite; the invention of incident quite endless —from the inlaid marbles of the pavement to the outmost fold of fading hills, there is not a square inch of the picture without its group of fancies: its colour, though broken in general effect, is incomparably beautiful and brilliant in detail; and there is as much architectural design and landscape gardening in the middle distance as would be worth, to any student of Renaissance composition, at least twenty separate journeys to Genoa and Vicenza. For those who like towers better than temples, and wild hills better than walled terraces, the second distance, reaching to the horizon, will be found equally rich in its gifts.

522.

I pass by this picture for the moment; we shall return to it presently.

523. Agrippina (1839).

There was once some wonderful light in this painting, but it has been chilled by time. If it were in a better place, there would be seen some noble passages in it; but architecture of the class here chosen is unavailable for producing an impressive picture.

525. Bacchus and Ariadne (1840).

This 1840 picture is interesting, as the first exhibited in the Academy which was indicative of definite failure in power of hand and eye; the trees being altogether ill painted, and especially uncertain in form of stem. Of the figures I have spoken already. There are pretty passages in the distance, but none which can be considered as redeeming; it should be banished from these walls with all kindly haste.

527. Venice—the Bridge of Sighs (1840).

One of the worst of Turner's later pictures. He had at this time quite lost the power of painting architectural detail, and his feeling for *Gothic* architecture had never, at any period of his life, been true, owing to his early education among classical models. He always painted it too white. He has, besides, altered the proportions of the windows of the Ducal Palace, thrust the prison out of its line some points round to the north, and raised the Bridge of Sighs much too high. But the great singularity of the picture is, that, with a caprice much resembling many of Tintoret's, he has striven to be gay where every one else would have been gloomy, and painted the Bridge of Sighs in intense light—all white against tender blue, as if it had been just built of alabaster for a queen to cross at her bridal. We have seen him get into the same temper beside the Lake Avernus. There seemed through all his life to be one main sorrow and fear haunting him—a sense of the passing away, or else the destructive and tempting character of beauty. The choice of subject for a clue to all his compositions, the "Fallacies of Hope," marked this strongly; and he would constantly express an extreme beauty where he *meant* that there was most threatening and ultimate sorrow. Compare, in the present series, this picture, the "Golden Bough," the "Phryne," and the "Sun of Venice."

531. The Burial of Wilkie (1842).

Spoiled by Turner's endeavour to give funereal and unnatural blackness to the sails. There is considerable power in parts of it, but it has no high merit, nor material interest. There are several pictures of this kind in the National collection, which are all but valueless among so many beautiful ones, but which would be precious to students in our provincial towns. Surely it would be well if one or two could thus be set on active and honourable service, instead of remaining, as they must in the principal gallery, subjects for languid contemplation, or vague regret.

532. The Exile and the Rock Limpet (1842).

Once a noble piece of colour, now quite changed just at the focus of light where the sun is setting, and injured everywhere. The figure is not, however, in reality quite so ill drawn as it looks, its appearance of caricatured length being in great part owing to the strong reflection of the

limbs, mistaken by the eye, at a distance, for part of the limbs themselves.

The lines which Turner gave with this picture are very important, being the only verbal expression of that association in his mind of sunset colour with blood, before spoken of:—

> "Ah, thy tent-formed shell is like
> A soldier's mighty bivouac, alone
> Amidst a sea of blood.——
> ——But *you* can join your comrades."

The conceit of Napoleon's seeing a resemblance in the limpet's shell to a tent was thought trivial by most people at the time; it may be so (though not to my mind); the second thought, that even this poor wave-washed disk had power and liberty, denied to *him*, will hardly, I think, be mocked at.

535. The "Sun of Venice" going to Sea (1843).

"Il Sole di Venezia" is supposed to be the name of the fishing boat. (I have actually seen this name on a boat's stern.) The nomenclature is emphasized by a painting of Venice, with the sun rising, on the main sail of the boat, which, if the picture were hung lower, the reader would find to be itself a little vignette. The compliment to the Venetian fisher as an artist is, however, a little overstrained. I have never seen any elaborate landscape on the sails, but often the sun, moon, and stars, with crosses and chequer patterns—sometimes a saint or madonna, rather more hard-featured than mainland saints.[1]

If the reader will look back from this picture to the "Ulysses," he will be struck by the apparent persistence of Turner's mind in the same idea of boat beauty; only the Venetian example is incomparably the loveliest, its sails being true in form and set, and exquisitely wrought in curve. The prevailing melancholy of Turner's mind at the time was, however, marked in the motto; Academy Catalogue, 1843:—

[1] The reader will find nearly every variety of these sails drawn with unerring accuracy, and affectionate fidelity, in the later pictures of Mr. E. W. Cooke, and some account of their general character in my notes on the "Harbours of England."

Fair shines the morn, and soft the Zephyr blows;
Venetia's fisher spreads his sail so gay,
"Nor heeds the demon that in grim repose
Expects his evening prey."[1]

The sea in this picture was once exquisitely beautiful: it is not very severely injured, but has lost much of its transparency in the green ripples. The sky was little more than flake white laid with the pallet-knife: it has got darker, and spotted, destroying the relief of the sails. The buildings in the distance are the ducal palace, dome of St. Mark's, and on the extreme left the tower of San Giorgio Maggiore. The ducal palace, as usual, is much too white, but with beautiful gradations in its relief against the morning mist. The marvellous brilliancy of the arrangement of colour in this picture renders it, to my mind, one of Turner's leading works in oil.

541. San Benedetto (1843).

This picture is wrongly named in the published catalogue. The "Approach to Venice," painted in 1844, to illustrate Byron's lines, was sold on the Academy walls, and is not among the pictures belonging to the nation. This one was exhibited in 1843, under the title of "San Benedetto, looking towards Fusina." But even the "San Benedetto" is a mistake of Turner's; there being no church nor quarter belonging to that saint on either side of the Giudecca, or in any possible way included in this view. The church of San Benedetto is deep in the town, close to the Ca' Grimani; and the only way of accounting for the title given, is that Turner might have half remembered the less frequently occurring name of St. Biagio, under whose protection the "fondamenta"—or block of houses on the left of this picture—with some spacious barracks, are verily placed. St. Biagio has no church, however; and the nearest one

[1] Turner seems to have revised his own additions to Gray, in the catalogues, as he did his pictures on the walls, with much discomfiture to the painter and the public. He wanted afterwards to make the first lines of this legend rhyme with each other; and to read:—

"Fair shines the morn, the Zephyr" (west wind) "blows a gale"
Venetia's fisher spreads his painted sail.

The two readings got confused, and, if I remember right, some of the catalogues read "soft the Zephyr blows a gale" and "spreads his painted sail so gay"—to the great admiration of the collectors of the Sibylline leaves of the "Fallacies of Hope."

which, by any stretch of imagination, could be gathered into this view, is the little Santa Eufemia. The buildings on the right are also, for the most part, imaginary in their details, especially in the pretty bridge which connects two of their masses: and yet, without one single accurate detail, the picture is the likest thing to what it is meant for—the looking out of the Giudecca landwards, at sunset—of all that I have ever seen. The buildings have, in reality, that proportion and character of mass, as one glides up the centre of the tide stream: they float exactly in that strange, mirageful, wistful way in the sea mist—rosy ghosts of houses without foundations; the blue line of poplars and copse about the Fusina marshes shows itself just in that way on the horizon; the flowing gold of the water, and quiet gold of the air, face and reflect each other just so; the boats rest so, with their black prows poised in the midst of the amber flame, or glide by so, the boatman stretched far aslope upon his deep-laid oar.

Take it all in all, I think this the best Venetian picture of Turner's which is left to us; for the "Approach to Venice" (of 1844), which was beyond all comparison the best, is now a miserable wreck of dead colours. *This* is tolerably safe. The writer of the notes in the published catalogue is mistaken in supposing that the upper clouds have changed in colour; they were always dark purple, edged with scarlet; but they have got chilled and opaque. The blue of the distance has altered slightly, making the sun too visible a spot; but the water is little injured, and I think it the best piece of surface-painting which Turner has left in oil colours. One of the strongest points in his Venice painting is his understanding of the way a gondola is rowed, owing to his affectionate studies of boats when he was a boy, and throughout his life. No other painters ever give the thrust of the gondoliers rightly; they make them bend affectedly—very often impossibly—flourishing with the oar as if they stood up merely to show their figures. Many of our painters even put the oar on the wrong side of the boat.[1] The gondolier on the left side of this picture, rowing the long barge, is exactly right, at the moment of the main thrust. Nevertheless,

[1] The stern, or guiding oar of the gondola, is always on the right hand side. For more detailed account of the modes of rowing in Venice, see "Stones of Venice," Vol. II., Appendix I.

considered as a boatman, Turner is seriously to be blamed for allowing the fouling of those two gondolas in the middle of the picture, one of which must certainly have gone clear through the other before they could get into their present position.

549. Undine giving the Ring (1846).

I shall take no notice of the three pictures painted in the period of decline. It was ill-judged to exhibit them: they occupy to Turner's other works precisely the relation which "Count Robert of Paris" and "Castle Dangerous" hold to Scott's early novels. They are also in positions which render it impossible to point out to the reader the *distinctive* characters in the execution, indicative of mental disease; though in reality these characters are so trenchant that the time of fatal change may be brought within a limit of three or four months, towards the close of the year 1845.

522. The Fighting Temeraire[1] (1839).

I return to this picture, instead of taking it in its due order; and I think I shall be able to show reason for pleading that, whatever ultimate arrangement may be adopted for the Turner gallery, this canvass, may always close the series. I have stated in the "Harbours of England" that it was the last picture he ever executed with his *perfect* power; but that statement needs some explanation. He produced, as late as the year 1843, works which, take them all in all, may rank among his greatest; but they were great by reason of their majestic or tender conception, more than by workmanship; and they show some failure in distinctness of sight, and firmness of hand. This is especially marked when any vegetation occurs, by imperfect and blunt rendering of the foliage; and the "Old Temeraire" is the last picture in which Turner's execution is as firm and faultless as in middle life;—the last in which lines requiring exquisite precision, such as those of the masts and yards of shipping, are drawn rightly, and at once. When he painted the "Temeraire," Turner could, if he had liked, have painted the "Shipwreck" or the "Ulysses" over again; but, when he painted the "Sun of Venice," though he was able to do different, and in some sort more beautiful things, he could not have done *those* again.

[1] "The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her last berth, to be broken up."—(Acad. Catalogue.)

I consider, therefore, Turner's period of central power, entirely developed and entirely unabated, to begin with the "Ulysses," and close with the "Temeraire"; including a period, therefore, of ten years exactly, 1829–1839.

The one picture, it will be observed, is of sunrise; the other of sunset.

The one of a ship entering on its voyage; and the other of a ship closing its course for ever.

The one, in all the circumstances of its subject, unconsciously illustrative of his own life in its triumph.

The other, in all the circumstances of its subject, unconsciously illustrative of his own life in its decline.

I do not suppose that Turner, deep as his bye-thoughts often were, had any under meaning in either of these pictures: but, as accurately as the first sets forth his escape to the wild brightness of Nature, to reign amidst all her happy spirits, so does the last set forth his returning to die by the shore of the Thames: the cold mists gathering over his strength, and all men crying out against him, and dragging the old "fighting Temeraire" out of their way, with dim, fuliginous contumely.

The period thus granted to his consummate power seems a short one. Yet, within the space of it, he had made five-sixths (or about 80) of the England drawings; the whole series of the Rivers of France—66 in number; for the Bible illustrations, 26; for Scott's works, 62; for Byron's, 33; for Rogers', 57; for Campbell's, 20; for Milton's, 7; for Moore's, 4; for the Keepsake, 24; and of miscellaneous subjects, 20 or 30 more; the least total of the known drawings being thus something above 400:—allow twelve weeks a year for oil painting and travelling, and the drawings (wholly exclusive of unknown private commissions and some thousands of sketches) are at the rate of one a week through the whole period of ten years.

The work which thus nobly closes the series is a solemn expression of a sympathy with seamen and with ships, which had been one of the governing emotions in Turner's mind throughout his life. It is also the last of a group of pictures, painted at different times, but all illustrative of one haunting conception, of the central struggle at Trafalgar. The first was, I believe, that exhibited in the British Institution in 1808; "The battle of Trafalgar, as seen from the mizen

shrouds of the Victory." It is a magnificent picture in his early manner; it is in the nation's possession, and ought surely to have been exhibited in this series instead of the "Calais Pier," being remarkable in many ways, but chiefly for its endeavour to give the spectator a complete map of everything visible in the ships Victory and Redoutable at the moment of Nelson's death-wound. Then came the "Trafalgar," now at Greenwich Hospital, representing the Victory after the battle; a picture which, for my own part, though said to have been spoiled by ill-advised compliances on Turner's part with requests for alteration, I would rather have, than any one in the national collection. Lastly, came this "Temeraire," which is the best memorial that Turner could give to the ship which was the Victory's companion in her closing strife.[1]

The painting of the "Temeraire" was received with a general feeling of sympathy. No abusive voice, as far as I remember, was ever raised against it. And the feeling was just; for of all pictures of subjects not visibly involving human pain, this is, I believe, the most pathetic that was ever painted. The utmost pensiveness which can ordinarily be given to a landscape depends on adjuncts of ruin: but no ruin was ever so affecting as this gliding of the vessel to her grave. A ruin cannot be, for whatever memories may be connected with it, and whatever witness it may have borne to the courage or the glory of men, it never seems to have offered itself to their danger, and associated itself with their acts, as a ship of battle can. The mere facts of motion, and obedience to human guidance, double the interest of the vessel: nor less her organised perfectness, giving her the look, and partly the character of a living creature, that may indeed be maimed in limb, or decrepit in frame, but must either live or die, and cannot be added to nor diminished from—heaped up and dragged down—as a building can.

[1] She was the second ship in Nelson's line; and, having little provisions or water on board, was what sailors call "flying light," so as to be able to keep pace with the fast sailing Victory. When the latter drew upon herself all the enemy's fire, the Temeraire tried to pass her, to take it in her stead; but Nelson himself hailed her to keep astern. The Temeraire cut away her studding-sails, and held back, receiving the enemy's fire into her bows without returning a shot. Two hours later, she lay with a French seventy-four gun-ship on each side of her, both her prizes, one lashed to her mainmast, and one to her anchor.

And this particular ship, crowned in the Trafalgar hour of trial with chief victory—prevailing over the fatal vessel that had given Nelson death—surely, if ever anything without a soul deserved honour or affection, we owed them here. Those sails that strained so full bent into the battle—that broad bow that struck the surf aside, enlarging silently in stedfast haste, full front to the shot—resistless and without reply—those triple ports whose choirs of flame rang forth in their courses, into the fierce revenging monotone, which, when it died away, left no answering voice to rise any more upon the sea against the strength of England—those sides that were wet with the long runlets of English life-blood, like press-planks at vintage, gleaming goodly crimson down to the cast and clash of the washing foam—those pale masts that stayed themselves up against the war-ruin, shaking out their ensigns through the thunder, till sail and ensign drooped—steep in the death-stilled pause of Andalusian air, burning with its witness-cloud of human souls at rest,—surely, for these some sacred care might have been left in our thoughts—some quiet space amidst the lapse of English waters?

Nay, not so. We have stern keepers to trust her glory to—the fire and the worm. Never more shall sunset lay golden robe on her, nor starlight tremble on the waves that part at her gliding. Perhaps, where the low gate opens to some cottage-garden, the tired traveller may ask, idly, why the moss grows so green on its rugged wood; and even the sailor's child may not answer, nor know, that the night-dew lies deep in the war-rents of the wood of the old Temeraire.

APPENDIX

As the number of pictures now at Marlborough House is large enough to give the reader some idea of the value of the entire collection, the following notes respecting what I believe to be the best mode of exhibiting that collection, may perhaps be useful.

The expediency of protecting oil pictures, as well as drawings, by glass, has been already fully admitted by the Trustees of the National Gallery, since the two Correggios, the Raphael, the Francias, the Perugino, the John Bellini, and Wilkie's "Festival," are already so protected.[1] And of all pictures whatsoever, Turner's are those which must suffer most from the present mode of their exposure. The effects of all the later paintings are dependent on the loading of the colour; and the white, in many of the high lights, stands out in diminutive crags, with intermediate craters and ravines: every one of whose cellular hollows serves as a receptacle for the dust of London, which cannot afterwards be removed but by grinding away the eminences that protect it—in other words, destroying the handling of Turner at the very spots which are the foci of his effects. Not only so, but the surfaces of most of his later pictures are more or less cracked; often gaping widely: every fissure offering its convenient ledge for the repose of the floating defilement.

Now, if the power of Turner were independent of the *pitch* of his colour, so that tones sinking daily into more pensive shade might yet retain their meaning and their harmony, it might be a point deserving discussion, whether their preservation at a particular key was worth the alleged inconvenience resulting from the use of glass. In the case of Wilkie's "Festival" for instance, the telling of his story would not be seriously interfered with, though the nose of the sot became less brilliantly rubicund, and the cloak of his wife sank into a homelier grey. But Turner's work is especially the painting of sunshine: it is not merely *relative* hue that he aims at, but absolute assertion of *positive* hue; and when he renders the

[1] I am at a loss to determine what the standard of excellence may be which is supposed to warrant the national expenditure, in addition to the price of the picture, of at least two pounds ten shillings for plate glass; since I observe that Garofalo's "St. Augustine" reaches that standard; but Titian's "Bacchus and Ariadne" does not; this picture being precisely, of all in the gallery, the one which I should have thought would have been first glazed, or first, at all events, after that noble Perugino; for the acquisition of which, by the way, the Trustees are to be most earnestly thanked.

edge of a cloud by pure vermilion or pure gold, his whole meaning is destroyed if the vermilion be changed into russet, and the gold into brown. He does not intend to tell you that sunsets are brown, but that they are burning; scarlet, with him, means scarlet, and in no wise dun colour, or dust colour; and white means white, and by no means, nor under any sort of interpretation, black.

But farther. The frequent assertion that glass interferes with the effect of oil pictures is wholly irrelevant. If a painting cannot be seen through glass, it cannot be seen through its own varnish. Any position which renders the glass offensive by its reflection, will in like manner make the glaze of the surface of the picture visible instead of the colour. The inconvenience is less distinct, there being often only a feeble glimmer on the varnish, when there would be a vivid flash on the glass, but the glimmer is quite enough to prevent the true colour's being seen; while there is this advantage in the glass, that it tells the spectator *when* he cannot see; whereas the glimmer of the varnish often passes, with an inattentive observer, for a feeble part of the real painting, and he does not try to get a better position.

Glass has another advantage, when used to cover the recent paintings of Turner, in giving a delicate, but very precious, softness to surfaces of pigment which, in his later practice, he was apt to leave looking too much like lime or mortar.

The question of the acceptance of glass as a protection for pictures is, however, intimately connected with another: namely, whether we are to continue to hang them above the eye. Of course, as long as a picture is regarded by us merely as a piece of ostentatious furniture, answering no other purpose than that of covering the walls of rooms with a dark tapestry worth a thousand guineas a yard, it is of no consequence whether we protect them or not. There will always be dealers ready to provide us with this same costly tapestry, in which we need not be studious to preserve the designs we do not care to see. If the rain or the rats should make an end of the Tintoret which is now hung in the first room of the Louvre at a height of fifty feet from the ground, it will be easy to obtain from the manufactories of Venice another Tintoret, which, hung at the same height, shall look altogether as well; and if any harm should happen to the fish in the sea piece of Turner which hangs above his "Carthage" in the National Gallery, a few bold dashes of white may replace them, as long as the picture remains where it is, with perfect satisfaction to the public. But if ever we come to understand that the function of a picture, after all, with respect to mankind, is not merely to be bought, but to be seen, it will follow that a picture which deserves a price deserves a place; and that all paintings which are worth keeping, are worth, also, the rent of so much wall as shall be necessary to

show them to the best advantage, and in the least fatiguing way for the spectator.

It would be interesting if we could obtain a return of the sum which the English nation pays annually for park walls to enclose game, stable walls to separate horses, and garden walls to ripen peaches; and if we could compare this ascertained sum with what it pays for walls to show its art upon. How soon it may desire to quit itself of the dishonour which would result from the comparison I do not know; but as the public appear to be seriously taking some interest in the pending questions respecting their new National Gallery, it is, perhaps, worth while to state the following general principles of good picture exhibitions.

1st. All large pictures should be on walls lighted from above; because light, from whatever point it enters, must be gradually subdued as it passes farther into the room. Now, if it enters at either side of the picture, the gradation of diminishing light to the other side is generally unnatural; but if the light falls from above, its gradation from the sky of the picture down to the foreground is never unnatural, even in a figure piece, and is often a great help to the effect of a landscape. Even interiors, in which lateral light is represented as entering a room, and none as falling from the ceiling, are yet best seen by light from above: for a lateral light contrary to the supposed direction of that in the picture will greatly neutralise its effect; and a lateral light in the same direction will exaggerate it. The artist's real intention can only be seen fairly by light from above.

2nd. Every picture should be hung so as to admit of its horizon being brought on a level with the eye of the spectator, without difficulty, or stooping. When pictures are small, one line may be disposed so as to be seen by a sitting spectator, and one to be seen standing, but more than two lines should never be admitted. A *model* gallery should have one line only; and some interval between each picture, to prevent the interference of the colours of one piece with those of the rest—a most serious source of deterioration of effect.

3rd. If pictures were placed thus, only in one low line, the gorgeousness of large rooms and galleries would be lost, and it would be useless to endeavour to obtain any imposing architectural effect by the arrangement or extent of the rooms. But the far more important objects might be attained, of making them perfectly comfortable, securing good light in the darkest days, and ventilation without draughts in the warmest and coldest.

4th. And if hope of architectural effect were thus surrendered, there would be a great advantage in giving large upright pictures a room to themselves. For as the perspective horizon of such pictures cannot always be brought low enough even for a standing spectator, and as, whether it can or not, the upper parts of great designs are often more interesting than the lower, the

floor at the farther extremity of the room might be raised by the number of steps necessary to give full command of the composition; and a narrow lateral gallery carried, from this elevated dais, to its sides. Such a gallery of close access to the flanks of pictures like Titian's Assumption or Peter Martyr would be of the greatest service to artists.

5th. It is of the highest importance that the works of each master should be kept together. No great master can be thoroughly enjoyed but by getting into his humour, and remaining long enough under his influence to understand his whole mode and cast of thought. The contrast of works by different masters never brings out their merits; but their defects: the spectator's effort (if he is kind enough to make any) to throw his mind into their various tempers, materially increases his fatigue—and the fatigue of examining a series of pictures carefully is always great, even under the most favourable circumstances. The advantage thus gained in peace of mind and power of understanding, by the assemblage of the works of each master, is connected with another, hardly less important, in the light thrown on the painter's own progress of intellect and methods of study.

6th. Whatever sketches and studies for any picture exists by its master's hand, should be collected at any sacrifice; a little reciprocal courtesy among Governments might easily bring this about: such studies should be shown under glass (as in the rooms appropriated to drawings in the Louvre), in the centre of the room in which the picture itself is placed. The existing engravings from it, whatever their merit or demerit (it is often a great point in art education to demonstrate the *last*), should be collected and exhibited in a similar manner.

7th. Although the rooms, if thus disposed, would never, as aforesaid, produce any bold architectural effect (the tables just proposed in the centre of each room being especially adverse to such effect), they might be rendered separately beautiful, by decoration so arranged as not to interfere with the colour of the pictures. The blankness and poverty of colour are, in such adjuncts, much more to be dreaded than its power: the discordance of a dead colour is more painful than the discordance of a glowing one: and it is better slightly to eclipse a picture by pleasantness of adjunct, than to bring the spectator to it disgusted by collateral deformities.

8th. Though the idea of a single line of pictures, seen by light from above, involves externally, as well as internally, the sacrifice of the ordinary elements of architectural splendour, I am certain the exterior even of this long and low gallery could be rendered not only impressive, but a most interesting school of art. I would dispose it in long arcades; if the space were limited, returning upon itself like a labyrinth: the walls to be

double, with passages of various access between them, in order to secure the pictures from the variations of temperature in the external air; the outer walls to be of the most beautiful British building stones—chiefly our whitest limestone, black marble, and Cornish serpentine, variously shafted and inlaid; between each two arches a white marble niche, containing a statue of some great artist; the whole approximating, in effect, to the lower arcades of the Baptistery of Pisa, continued into an extent like that of the Pisan Campo Santo. Courts should be left between its returns, with porches at the outer angles, leading one into each division of the building appropriated to a particular school; so as to save the visitor from the trouble of hunting for his field of study through the length of the labyrinth: and the smaller chambers appropriated to separate pictures should branch out into these courts from the main body of the building.

9th. As the condition that the pictures should be placed at the level of sight would do away with all objections to glass as an impediment of vision (who is there who cannot see the Perugino in the National Gallery?), *all* pictures should be put under glass, and firmly secured and made air-tight behind. The glass is an important protection, not only from dust, but from chance injury. I have seen a student in the Vernon Gallery mixing his oil colours on his pallet knife, and holding the knife, full charged, within half an inch, or less, of the surface of the picture he was copying, to see if he had matched the colour. The slightest accidental jar given to the hand would have added a new and spirited touch to the masterpiece.

10th. Supposing the pictures thus protected, it matters very little to what atmosphere their frames and glasses may be exposed. The most central situation for a National Gallery would be the most serviceable, and therefore the best. The only things to be *insisted* upon are a gravel foundation and good drainage, with, of course, light on the roof, uninterrupted by wafts of smoke from manufactory chimneys, or shadows of great blocks of houses.

11th. No drawing is worth a nation's keeping if it be not either good, or documentarily precious. If it be either of these, it is worth a bit of glass and a wooden frame. All drawings should be glazed, simply framed in wood, and enclosed in sliding grooves in portable cases. For the more beautiful ones, golden frames should be provided at central tables; turning on a swivel, with grooves in the thickness of them, into which the wooden frame (beaded) should slide in an instant, and show the drawing framed in gold. The department for the drawings should be, of course, separate, and like a beautiful and spacious library, with its cases of drawings ranged on the walls (as those of the coins are in the Coin-room

of the British Museum), and convenient recesses, with pleasant lateral light, for the visitors to take each his case of drawings into. Lateral light is best for drawings, because the variation in intensity is small, and of little consequence to a small work; but the shadow of the head is inconvenient in looking close at them, when the light falls from above.

12th. I think the collections of Natural History should be kept separate from those of Art. Books, manuscripts, coins, sculpture, pottery, metal-work, engravings, drawings, and pictures, should be in one building; and minerals, fossils, shells, and stuffed animals (with a perfect library of works on natural history), in another, connected, as at Paris, with the Zoological Gardens.

It would of course be difficult to accomplish all this, but the national interest is only beginning to be awakened in works of art; and as soon as we care, nationally, one half as much for pictures as we do for drawing-room furniture, or footmen's liveries, all this, or more than this, will be done—perhaps after many errors and failures, and infinite waste of money in trying to economise; but I feel convinced we shall do it at last: and although poor Turner might well, himself, have classed the whole project, had he seen his pictures in their present places, among the profoundest of the Fallacies of Hope, I believe that even from the abyss of Marlborough House he will wield stronger influence than from the brilliant line of the Academy; that this dark and insulted "Turner Gallery" will be the germ of a noble and serviceable "National Gallery," and that to the poor barber's son of Maiden-lane we shall owe our first understanding of the right way either to look at Nature, or at Art.

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